



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

Distr.: General
5 October 2007

Original: English

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Thirty-ninth session

Summary record of the 805th meeting (Chamber A)

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 2 August 2007, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Simms (Vice-Chairperson)

Contents

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

Combined third and fourth periodic report of Jordan

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.



In the absence of Ms. Šimonović, Ms. Simms, 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)

Combined third and fourth periodic report of Jordan (CEDAW/C/JOR/3-4; CEDAW/C/JOR/Q/4 and Add.1)

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

2. **Mr. Touq** (Jordan), introducing Jordan's combined third and fourth periodic report (CEDAW/C/JOR/3-4), said that, since the submission of its second periodic report (CEDAW/C/JOR/2), there had been two important developments in respect of women's rights in his country. The first was the publication, on 1 August 2007, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Official Gazette, thus formally completing its adoption and giving it the force of law.

3. In addition to the Convention, five other international instruments had also been published on that same date: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. What was more, disabled women were guaranteed additional rights with the signature on 31 March 2007 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol. The second important development was the success of women candidates in the recent municipal elections, thanks to legislation which had set aside 20 per cent of all local council seats for women. To follow up on that success, the Government had enacted a new elections law, which set aside six seats in Parliament for women.

4. The Government had also enacted a number of other significant laws in respect of liberties and rights, including women's rights, and the Jordanian National Commission for Women, in implementation of the Committee's recommendation, had proposed a bill that would place its existence on a legislative basis. It was

expected that all proposed legislation would be in effect in approximately two years. At the administrative level, the Government had decreed that the National Commission for Women must be included in the discussion of any legislation relevant to women's issues. It also had ordered that, for the purpose of official transactions, a woman's testimony must be considered equivalent to a man's.

5. Turning to the participation of women in public life and decision-making, he said the Government had taken special measures aimed at accelerating equality between men and women. For example, three women had been appointed ambassadors to foreign countries and a woman, for the first time, had been appointed head of a court. Women were also set to constitute at least 3 per cent of the armed forces under the Government's revised strategic plan for the armed forces. Meanwhile, the media were playing an important role by providing extensive coverage of the expanding role of women in public life.

6. In the field of education, Jordan had achieved parity between men and women in respect of admission to university at the undergraduate level, and 37 per cent of graduate students were women. Moreover, a World Bank study had ranked Jordan first in the Arab world in achievement of educational goals. The Government, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, had also taken various initiatives aimed at encouraging girls to choose non-traditional subject matters.

7. On the issue of women's reproductive health, he said that his country's HIV/AIDS policies incorporated a gender perspective. Although the number of HIV infections was low, the Government had launched a five-year programme to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and persuade decision makers to enact laws that strengthened women's reproductive rights, including the right to protection against HIV/AIDS.

8. As a developing country, Jordan placed great emphasis on formulating economic policies aimed at enabling women and increasing their participation in the labour market. Economic reform and trade liberalization had created greater job opportunities for women, who now formed nearly 15 per cent of the labour force. As part of its comprehensive strategy to combat violence, the Government had proposed a draft act on domestic violence and had formulated a national framework on protection against such violence. Special

shelters had been created for victims, and the security forces had undertaken to transform the women's protective custody centre into an institution where they could be reformed and trained in a setting removed from prison.

9. The Government had continued to cooperate with all relevant international, regional and national organizations in order to empower Jordanian women and had benefited, in that regard, from the Committee's concluding comments. In addition, the Government had collaborated with 27 non-governmental organizations in preparing its current report. In conclusion, he said that, despite Jordanian achievements in advancing women's rights, regional economic conditions, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the influx of Iraqi refugees had placed tremendous strains on his country's limited resources. Those strains, in turn, had limited its ability to implement all provisions of the Convention and had impeded the progress of Jordanian women.

Articles 1 to 6

10. **Ms. Shin** commended the State party for its considerable efforts to advance the status of women, including the publication of the Convention in its Official Gazette and the ongoing political reform. The appointment of Ms. Khader as Secretary-General of the Jordanian National Commission for Women demonstrated the Government's commitment in that regard. She hoped that Dr. Khader would not only spearhead the Government's work on women's issues, but also participate in data collection, working with the finance and other ministries in order to ensure gender mainstreaming.

11. While welcoming the legal reforms mentioned by the delegation, she wondered whether the process could be accelerated. Other legal reforms were necessary too. In particular, Jordan needed to introduce comprehensive legislation that embodied and ensured the practical realization of the principle of gender equality (article 2 of the Convention), a specific law on the rights of women, and new domestic violence and sexual harassment laws. It also needed to revise its Penal Code. It might therefore wish to consider establishing a task force on further legal reform. Lastly, she had heard that Jordan had recently adopted new regulations for non-governmental organizations and was now considering a draft law on NGOs. If the Government was truly committed to building partnerships with civil society, it should seriously

reconsider introducing such a law, which would significantly restrict the work of such organizations.

12. **Ms. Neubauer** said that the report reflected the important role of the Jordanian National Commission for Women and Government efforts to promote the advancement of women in all walks of life, including through the establishment of various national councils and the development of a number of strategies which, if properly implemented, would benefit Jordanian women. Having said that, the issues raised in the Committee's previous concluding comments regarding the national machinery remained a concern.

13. While commending the State party for establishing the National Centre for Human Rights, she was concerned by the statement in the report (para. 43) that the data contained in the Centre's annual report did not indicate any complaints referring specifically to discrimination against women, that the originators of other complaints were not broken down by sex, and that consequently it was not possible to determine the exact nature of complaints lodged by women. She would be interested to know what was being done to raise women's awareness of their rights and to ensure that they turned to the Centre whenever their human rights were violated.

14. In order to be fully effective, the National Commission for Women needed to have well-defined functions and responsibilities, adequate resources, and the capacity to coordinate and monitor gender mainstreaming. In that connection, she would appreciate concrete information about the findings of the study recently conducted by the Jordanian National Commission for Women on its structure and the development of an alternative structure that would be better adapted to evolving national conditions, and the mandate, functions, role and powers that were envisaged for it. Lastly, the status of the National Strategy for Women was unclear. Was it simply a guiding document or had it been adopted by the Government? If the latter was the case, she would be interested to know more about its objectives, time frame and mechanisms for monitoring progress.

15. **Ms. Chutikul** noted from the responses to the list of issues and questions (para. 4) that the restructuring of the Jordanian National Commission for Women was under way, but wished to know what exactly that restructuring entailed. She was particularly curious about the Commission's legal framework and political

clout, and mechanisms to ensure coordination with other ministries. With regard to the latter, it was not enough for the Commission to work through its Supervisory Board, particularly at the local level. The State party might also wish to explain how the Commission worked with the gender units that had been set up in various ministries. Lastly, she asked the State party to provide more information about the National Strategy for Women 2006-2010.

16. **Ms. Patten** asked the State party whether it had any plans to withdraw its reservations to the Convention or to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention. If not, she would be interested to know what was preventing it from doing so. The Committee had received some disturbing information concerning the Government practice of placing women at risk of becoming victims of an honour crime in “protective” detention, as a result of which perpetrators often walked free and many would-be victims ended up being incarcerated. While welcoming the establishment of the first Government-run shelter (the Family Reconciliation Shelter), she was concerned by reports that the Government had no concrete plans to transfer women currently held in protective detention to that shelter, and wished to know what steps were being taken in that regard. In his report on his recent mission to Jordan (A/HRC/4/33/Add.3), the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment was highly critical of the current policy, stating that depriving innocent women and girls of their liberty for as long as 14 years could only be qualified as inhuman treatment and was highly discriminatory, and recommended instead that women at risk of becoming victims of honour crimes should be housed in specific victim shelters where they were at liberty but still enjoyed safe conditions.

17. The fact that a number of discriminatory laws were still in force in Jordan meant that honour crimes continued to be committed. For example, under article 98 of the Penal Code, sentences were reduced in cases where the perpetrator had committed the crime in a state of great fury and, for crimes usually punishable by death such as premeditated murder, the minimum sentence was just one year in prison if there were extenuating circumstances. She had learned that the Jordanian courts had recently sentenced a man to just six months in prison for murdering his pregnant, divorced sister. Under article 99 of the Penal Code, meanwhile, the courts could halve the sentence if the

victim’s family dropped the charges. Family members were complicit in most honour killings and therefore almost always waived the right to file a complaint. She asked whether the Government had any plans to review and repeal those provisions and whether it pursued honour crimes on a par with other violent crimes.

18. Lastly, she was extremely concerned by reports that women and girls suspected of engaging in extramarital sex were being forced to undergo virginity tests. Even more upsetting were reports that such tests were being conducted on the corpses of women and girls believed to have been victims of honour crimes in order to determine whether or not they had been virgins at the time of death and whether or not the perpetrator should therefore benefit from mitigating circumstances. Such practices pointed to an extremely discriminatory and abusive legal environment and should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

19. **Ms. Pimentel** wished to know more about the draft law on protection against sexual violence, including the time frame for its consideration and approval by Parliament. In his introductory statement, the head of delegation had mentioned Jordan’s excellent record on education. Furthermore, paragraph 22 of the responses referred to the introduction of two projects with a component related to gender issues and the revision of school curricula to make them more gender-sensitive. According to Jordanian NGOs, however, the Government was not doing anything to change the social values taught to children or the stereotypical roles of women and girls. Moreover, school textbooks continued to depict traditional family settings and practices. She would be interested to know whether the State party agreed with that assessment and, if so, what obstacles existed and what strategy was in place to overcome them.

20. **Ms. Gabr** said that, in the Arab region as elsewhere in the world, the situation of women would not improve unless the image of women changed. In that regard, she would be interested to know more about the Government’s vision and strategy for school textbooks and curricula, and whether it had any plans to use the media to change public opinion or to train people working in the judiciary.

21. She agreed with the State party’s assessment (report, para. 56) that stereotypical attitudes about social roles were among the main obstacles to women’s exercising their rights on an equal footing with men.

Changing such attitudes would facilitate the adoption of legislation currently before Parliament. Given the increase in religious extremism across the region, it was important to address religious discourse in such a way that dealt with social issues and expressed the true — moderate — spirit of Islam. She asked the State party to explain how it intended to address that issue and whether it planned to provide training for imams.

22. **Ms. Gaspard** said that stereotyping led to a general acceptance of violence against women and, in some cases, even the killing of women. She noted that the Government appeared to rely mainly on civil society organizations to combat prejudices and wondered whether there were any plans to develop a consistent national policy against stereotyping. She also requested further information on the Government's recommendations to the media.

23. **Ms. Maiolo** said that she would appreciate an update on domestic violence in Jordan and the adoption of the draft act on protection against domestic violence in particular. Noting that the perpetrators of violence against women often received light sentences, she wondered whether there were any female judges.

24. **Mr. Touq** (Jordan) reiterated that the legislative and executive branches were fully independent and that the Government could not instruct Parliament to accelerate the adoption of a particular law. He agreed that it would be beneficial to elaborate a specific law on women's rights and would discuss the idea with the Jordanian National Commission for Women and other concerned parties. It was difficult to evaluate the draft law on NGOs, as it had not yet been finalized. Certain NGOs that received funds from abroad had been accused of using those funds to further foreign agendas. Many civil society organizations had therefore called for the establishment of a coordinating mechanism on financing. He was confident that the Government and civil society would develop a successful partnership and that an agreement on the regulation of NGOs would eventually be reached.

25. Jordan did not plan to withdraw its reservations to the Convention, as Islamic jurisprudence prevented it from doing so. Concerning the possible amendment of articles that discriminated against women, including articles 98 and 340 of the Penal Code, it was clear that civil society needed to become more involved in educating and pressuring not just the general public but also members of Parliament. With respect to the

growth of fundamentalism, he pointed out that the Amman Message, which emphasized the core values of moderation, tolerance, equality between men and women and freedom of religion, was currently being used to train imams in Jordan and various European countries.

26. Lastly, he emphasized that value systems were very difficult to change and that the forces of resistance in the region were becoming stronger. The Government was doing its utmost to modify societal norms and values through training programmes and new school curricula and had been commended by both the World Bank and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for having spearheaded educational reform in the region.

27. **Ms. Khader** (Jordan) said that the legal framework of the Jordanian National Commission for Women was currently being revised and that a system for receiving and investigating complaints had been established. The Government had raised the Commission's budget allocation by 20 per cent and had promised a further increase in 2008. The action plan for the National Strategy for Women (2006-2010) was being prepared in cooperation with other government bodies and NGOs and would soon be completed. Components of the action plan included women's participation in public life, political participation, the media, social security, violence prevention, education, health care and rural women.

28. Regarding violence against women, the Government had submitted a draft amendment to the Penal Code which increased the penalty for such crimes to one to seven years' imprisonment. In an effort to discourage honour killings, the Government had also submitted a draft amendment providing that, in cases where the victim and the perpetrator were from the same family and the family had dropped the charges, courts would not be permitted to halve the sentence. Shelters had been built for women who were at risk of becoming victims of honour crimes, and an initiative enabling NGOs to build additional shelters was currently being prepared. NGOs were cooperating with the Government on another initiative to remove women from "protective detention" and place them in shelters. She was pleased to report that the number of honour killings in Jordan had decreased significantly.

29. Women comprised 4 per cent of civil court judges, and the quota for women students at the

Judicial Institute had been set at 15 per cent. The Ministry of Justice had established a Department for Women, Family and Human Rights, which was responsible for training judges and law enforcement officers in the rights of women and children. Lastly, NGOs and the Government were drafting a law on protection against domestic violence, based on the model law prepared by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

30. Jordan periodically reviewed its reservations to the Convention and the possibility of lifting any of them. Recently, it had deleted article 12 of the Passports Act, which had stipulated that the permission of her husband was required if a woman wished to travel. With that proviso removed, there was thus no need for the relevant reservation to continue, and it was to be hoped that it would be removed in the near future. As for coordination with the media, the current year had seen a large portion of airtime devoted to women's rights and their participation in public life. Public information advertisements had been shown, as had programmes that would reinforce the message of women's equal status with men and their shared responsibility for achieving development. Such broadcasts had been particularly useful in the recent elections.

31. Trafficking in women was forbidden under the Jordanian Penal Code, which laid down appropriate penalties for the crime. Jordan was in close touch with international mechanisms in that area, and was currently developing special efforts and programmes, especially in the light of recent increases in freedom of movement that might lead to increased cross-border crime. There were mechanisms for submitting complaints about trafficking, and measures had been taken to ensure that women who came to work in Jordan were not being trafficked. Laws were continuously under review to ensure that they were free of any discriminatory clauses. The National Commission for Women had a government communications network that encompassed all gender liaison officers in all ministries. A gender unit had been established in the Ministry of Planning, as an experiment; its work would be reviewed in a year or two, to see if the better approach to gender mainstreaming was to have designated units in every ministry or to continue with gender liaison officers working directly with the Commission.

32. Surveys had been conducted of the practices followed in several ministries to determine to what extent they were in line with the requirements of gender mainstreaming. Those surveys would be continued and were now being extended to examine the private sector and its commitment to equal rights between men and women. The results of the first private-sector survey, covering the pharmaceutical industry, would be announced in mid-August. Initial examination of the results pointed to several problems, especially in terms of guaranteeing maternity rights and women's access to promotion to the higher company levels.

33. **Ms. Khyami** (Jordan), referring to the country's efforts to combat stereotypes about women, said that the Ministry of Education had started introducing the concepts of women's rights and gender equality in the education curricula at the preschool and primary levels, in part by using electronic games. At higher educational levels, since 2005 the curriculum had included a compulsory course for all students on human rights, including the rights of women. At the same time, training was being provided for the teachers who would be using the revised curricula. At the University of Jordan's Faculty of Law, a course was being taught on human rights, the rights of women and the rights of the child. The University now had a special centre on women's issues, which issued a certificate of higher studies at the level of a master's degree.

34. Part of the programme of changing stereotypes with regard to women was directed at preachers and imams. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs was trying to develop a guide for preachers and imams in mosques and to introduce the concepts of women's rights and gender equality to them. There were, in fact, a large number of women preachers and also large numbers of women in the faculties of sharia law at Jordanian universities, which encouraged an emphasis on the rights of women in Islam. The coalition of women's committees, and other organizations, were also working to change stereotypes, especially in rural areas. They would visit homes, or women's groups, or young people and children, in order to lead discussions aimed at changing ideas about women and their role.

35. Use was also being made of the mass media to make people aware that women could work side-by-side with men, as partners whether at home or outside. Programmes in the visual media emphasized that, in

some fields where women had not usually been found, they were now working with success, and at the same time reconciling their work with their roles as mothers and wives. Those ideas were also communicated to young men and women through centres for young people, with emphasis on the role that young women themselves could play in working to eliminate stereotypes.

36. **Ms. Gabr** asked which reservations might be withdrawn in the future.

37. **Ms. Chutikul** enquired which specific agency was responsible for anti-trafficking work and whether the Government of Jordan really recognized trafficking and prostitution as problems. Jordan should indicate whether it had ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and whether any perpetrators of trafficking had been prosecuted.

38. **Mr. Touq** (Jordan) pointed out that he had not said that Jordan would lift one or other of the reservations, but rather had indicated that there were legal developments in progress that might make one of them redundant. If the Government were to decide formally to lift one of the reservations, under the Constitution the whole issue of the Convention would have to go back to Parliament for consideration, which would open a Pandora's box. Therefore no steps should be taken that might endanger the whole process.

39. On trafficking in women, he clarified that Jordan had not ratified the United Nations Protocol referred to, although it was a signatory to it, and said that the issue was under active consideration. In order for the country to ratify it, certain laws would need to be amended, and the amendments would have to be approved by Parliament, whose work schedule was already overloaded. Anti-trafficking work was the purview of the Ministry of Justice and the police. He also clarified that prostitution is a crime in Jordan.

Articles 7 to 9

40. **Ms. Maiolo** said that, while welcoming the law on quotas for women's election to the municipal councils and the draft law on quotas for Parliament, she felt that laws, although very important, were not sufficient. As had already been said both by the delegation and by other experts, the problem lay in

stereotypes. She could not imagine that a woman, conditioned to accept that she and her family should be beaten by her husband, would ever be able to conceive of herself as being competent to stand for election. The Committee welcomed what it had heard about Jordan's programmes of awareness-raising directed at women and girls, making use of television programmes and so on. She felt that that was the main way that women could be convinced to put themselves forward as candidates.

41. **Ms. Neubauer** praised the various measures introduced to increase women's participation in public and political life, in particular their participation in elected assemblies. Those measures demonstrated that the Jordanian Government and legislature were using article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 on temporary special measures as a way to overcome the underrepresentation of women. However, the minimum of six seats reserved for women in the Jordanian Parliament was really not enough. She asked whether the intention to introduce the minimum of 20 per cent participation in the National Assembly, in line with the quota for local councils, was supported by the country's highest political powers. Jordan should also indicate whether there was a time frame for bringing in the higher quota, and whether the quota system would be based on the principle of proportional representation of women from all parts of the country.

42. With regard to women's access to appointed posts, there was evidence of political will to open doors for women to reach high-ranking and decision-making positions in the Government, the judiciary, the diplomatic corps and other public institutions, but the country report itself acknowledged that their participation in political and public decision-making did not correspond to the capacities and potential of Jordanian women. By ratifying the Convention, however, the Government had committed itself to accepting the right of Jordanian women to reach their full capacities and potential. Therefore, more aggressive interventions by the Government were needed, both in appointing more women to government positions and in influencing the perception of the general public regarding the role of women in decision-making.

43. **Ms. Gaspard**, noting that women were still severely underrepresented in political and public decision-making bodies in Jordan, asked whether it

was envisaged that the 20 per cent quota for the number of women in municipal councils would be increased in the future. It was important to keep setting the targets higher; otherwise, there was a danger that any quota would act as a “ceiling”.

44. The number of women in Parliament must also increase. A European Union study had shown that, where quotas for the number of women in municipal councils had been introduced, the women elected had helped to improve local life by bringing new issues to the political agenda, such as the need for day-care provision and family-friendly working hours. Women could help bring about such improvements at the national level too. They must also be provided with training to give them the confidence to stand for election and to equip them with the skills necessary to become leaders at the national and local levels.

45. **Ms. Gabr** asked whether there was any prospect of withdrawal of the reservation to article 9, paragraph 2, of the Convention, so that Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians could transmit their nationality to their children. The same issue had been resolved successfully in other Arab countries, although she acknowledged the current difficulties that prevented Jordan from giving its full attention to the problem.

46. Noting that, in humanitarian or special cases, a passport could be issued for a period of five years — which made it easier for a Jordanian woman married to a non-Jordanian to obtain passports for her children in special circumstances — she asked how many people had been issued with passports under that provision. The Committee also wished to know what measures were in place to provide such children with access to schools and universities and to ensure their freedom of movement. Lastly, she had information that foreign men married to Jordanian women were obliged to leave the country every three months in order to obtain a new visa. The State party should indicate whether any measures were in place to allow such men freedom of movement.

47. **Mr. Touq** (Jordan), responding to Ms. Maiolo’s comments, said that he could not provide specific statistics on the number of battered women in Jordan, but was certain that the number was insignificant and would thus compare favourably with that of many other countries. He wished to correct the misconception that violence against women was commonplace in the Arab and Islamic worlds, which

was a form of stereotype. Women, including those in rural areas, participated actively in elections, independently of their male relatives. Moreover, some 240 women had recently been elected to municipal councils.

48. The temporary election law was temporary only in the sense that it required parliamentary approval in order to come into effect. The law was currently the subject of an active national debate, and it was to be hoped that women’s success in the recent municipal elections would have a positive impact on that debate. The Government could not guarantee that the number of women in Parliament would increase significantly at the elections in November 2007, but efforts to boost their numbers would continue in the future.

49. There was a view in some quarters that the use of quotas was unconstitutional or contradictory to human rights principles. Most people, however, believed that quotas should be used as a temporary measure to facilitate women’s access to political life. It was hoped that such quotas could be lifted eventually, when women truly enjoyed equality without the need for additional help. Women had equal opportunities to be appointed to decision-making positions, although it was true that in practice they were still underrepresented. However, the country was changing, and Jordanian women now enjoyed far greater opportunities for education, travel and employment than previous generations had enjoyed.

50. Responding to Ms. Gabr, he said that the political situation in the region continued to make it difficult to review the reservation to article 9, paragraph 2, of the Convention, and he was not, therefore, in a position to state when it would be withdrawn. He did not know how many people had been issued with five-year passports, but could supply that information at a later date. Non-Jordanian men married to Jordanian women were permitted to stay in the country permanently, although they had to apply for a permit in order to obtain a job. The children of such parents were entitled to go to school in Jordan.

51. **Ms. Khader** (Jordan) said that the number of female members and leaders of political parties was increasing, and a high percentage of Cabinet members were women. One woman had recently been elected leader of a municipal council. In addition, more and more women were being appointed to leadership positions in academia and in all kinds of civil society

organizations, not only those directly involved with women's issues. Traditional attitudes were changing, and there was public support for the 20 per cent quota for participation by women in elected bodies. In addition, a mechanism was to be put in place to ensure that women were not denied promotion on the grounds of gender.

52. The performance of women in public office was often judged more harshly than that of their male counterparts. Media campaigns were under way to counter that attitude and to combat gender stereotypes in general. There were also plans to establish an institute for young women leaders in order to provide women with the skills needed for leadership positions. Action was being taken to mainstream gender in all public policies, to empower women at all levels of society, and to involve women in all aspects of national socio-economic development.

53. **Mr. Touq** (Jordan), referring to the issue of nationality, said that the Government had recently decided to grant refugees from the Gaza Strip living in Jordan the same rights to education and medical services as Jordanians. The children of Iraqi refugees, both boys and girls, were entitled to free schooling, whether or not they had legal resident status.

54. **Ms. Maiolo** said that she had not meant to imply that all women in Jordan or the Arab world were victims of domestic violence. She had merely wished to point out that efforts to support battered women would help increase the number of women having the confidence to run for office.

55. **Ms. Patten** requested a reply to her earlier question as to whether the Government had discussed the possibility of ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

56. **Mr. Touq** (Jordan) said that ratification of the Optional Protocol had not yet been discussed by the Government. However, the Jordanian National Commission for Women was lobbying the Government to consider the issue.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.