



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

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

**Summary record of the 1825th meeting**

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 27 October 2021, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Acosta Vargas

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*Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Yemen*

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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

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

*Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Yemen (CEDAW/C/YEM/7-8, CEDAW/C/YEM/Q/7-8 and CEDAW/C/YEM/RQ/7-8)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Yemen took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Ebrahim** (Yemen), introducing his country's combined seventh to eighth periodic reports (CEDAW/C/YEM/7-8), said that the Ministry of Legal Affairs, the Ministry of Human Rights and the National Commission for Women had sought the participation of various government institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in preparing the report. Despite the difficult circumstances in Yemen, the Government had complied with its reporting obligations to the Committee, which was a sign of its commitment to the international human rights treaties it had ratified and a reflection of its rights-based approach to advancing the situation of women in Yemen.
3. The coup d'état carried out by the Houthi militia on 21 September 2014 had had a devastating impact on Yemen, undermining his Government's efforts in general, and harming Yemeni women in particular. In taking control of State institutions, the militia had disrupted the implementation of the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference, held in 2014, during which Yemeni women had negotiated a 30 per cent quota for women's representation in elective office and government institutions. Despite those challenges, the Government had continued to foster cooperation between State institutions and civil society in an effort to promote and protect human rights.
4. In keeping with the women and peace and security agenda, the Government had committed to including women in mediation and peacebuilding efforts. However, the situation of women in Yemen had to be placed in the larger context of the intense human suffering caused by the conflict: rising oil and fuel prices, increasing poverty, deteriorating social services, a lack of resources, and numerous violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.
5. Yemen was facing a massive wave of displacement. In 2019, the number of internally displaced persons had reached 4.3 million, including 1 million returnees. Displaced Yemeni families had also been affected by heavy rains and catastrophic flooding, threatening the lives of some 10,000 families. The number of internally displaced persons was still rising as escalating missile attacks targeted residential areas in some governorates. In addition, there were constant violations of the Stockholm Agreement, resulting in the deaths of thousands of women and children at the hands of the Houthi militia.
6. According to estimates by the United Nations, 24.3 million persons or more, representing more than 80 per cent of the population, were in need of some kind of humanitarian assistance. Some 40 per cent of Yemeni families had lost their main source of income, leading to an increase in poverty rates, with nearly 80 per cent of the population living under the poverty line.
7. Hunger rates in Yemen were rising and, despite humanitarian assistance, 15.9 million persons went to bed hungry every night, while more than 1 million women and 2 million children required treatment for acute malnutrition. Less than 50 per cent of health-care facilities in the country were fully operational, and those that were running lacked qualified specialists, equipment and medicines. Front-line health-care workers fighting the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had not received their salaries for months, in spite of support from the international community, the World Health Organization and other organizations.
8. The Ministry had built several camps to receive persons seeking medical treatment and had established an ad hoc committee, headed by the Prime Minister, to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government had provided a package of health care and assistance services in cooperation with international organizations, the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre and the Kuwaiti and Emirati Red Crescent Societies, in order to combat and contain cholera and provide training to health-care workers.

9. Less than 22 per cent of people living in rural areas and 46 per cent of those in urban areas had access to public water supplies. Some 36 per cent of girls and 24 per cent of boys of school age were not attending school. Despite support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in providing incentives to teachers, more than 51 per cent of teachers had not received their salaries since 2016 in the Houthi-controlled areas.

10. Despite the enormous challenges facing Yemen, the Government had continued to develop the legislative framework needed to fight gender-based discrimination, and results were beginning to be seen in many areas. Several national strategies and public policies and programmes had been reactivated. Noteworthy among them was the National Strategy for the Development of Women, which had been established by the National Commission for Women for the period 2006–2015, and a strategy for the advancement of urban and rural women.

11. In 2012, the Government had established the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking and had prepared draft legislation on human trafficking that was currently before the parliament. In 2014, it had adopted a decision concerning accession to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

12. The main tasks of the National Commission for Women were to draft public policies pertaining to women, to implement the National Strategy for the Development of Women by incorporating it into all national plans and to adopt a gender mainstreaming policy to be implemented in various sectors for promoting the role of women. In the past five years, the Commission had conducted more than 115 training sessions for 3,734 persons, of whom 2,339, or 62 per cent, were women. It had also established a national network for women's access to justice, in cooperation with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and promoted other women's networks with the active participation of government institutions and NGOs.

13. The National Commission for Women had carried out many awareness-raising sessions on topics such as health care, politics, NGOs, legal matters and education. It had produced television spots and documentaries and had published guidebooks and brochures. In cooperation with the National Commission for Women, the Ministry of Human Rights had drafted a bill to combat violence against women and girls. The bill had been submitted to the parliament, but further progress had been halted following the coup d'état.

14. All State policies and strategies on the rights of children and women were being reactivated, including the National Strategy for Reproductive Health, the National Strategy for Food Security and the Social Protection Strategy. Although a number of executive plans had been set up to implement those strategies, such as a five-year plan of action for the period 2011–2015 to develop shelters for women in five governorates, they had stalled following the coup d'état. The Government was determined to reactivate that strategy for the period 2020–2025.

15. A decision adopted in 2013 had provided for a national plan of action to deal with internal displacement in Yemen. The plan would protect civilians against involuntary displacement, assist returnees and create permanent mechanisms of protection for the displaced. In 2009, the Government had adopted a policy on running and managing camps for internally displaced persons in cooperation with NGOs, national associations and local authorities. Complaints of human rights violations received by the Ministry of Human Rights, including those lodged by internally displaced persons and refugees, were referred to the Ministry of Justice, where appropriate.

16. The President of the Republic had set the priorities for a new government action plan: increased humanitarian action, restoration of public services throughout the country and increased participation by women in public life and decision-making positions. In 2013, the Government had set up a committee aimed at increasing women's representation in the judiciary, and there were indications of increased female participation in high-level diplomatic positions as well.

17. The Government was aware of the importance of protecting women in armed conflict and had adopted a variety of procedures, decrees, and international conventions along those

lines. Furthermore, in 2018, Yemen had endorsed the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups. The Constitution and military laws criminalized the perpetration of violence against women by military forces, and all claims of violation were investigated. The President had instructed the commander of the armed forces to ensure the complete protection of witnesses and informants in cases of gender-based violence.

18. A high-level relief committee had been established to provide humanitarian assistance in the context of armed conflict to all Yemeni people in urgent need, without distinction. In fact, it was the Houthi militia that was responsible for blocking the Yemeni people's access to humanitarian aid.

19. The Government had consistently responded to calls for dialogue and had participated in negotiations in Geneva, Kuwait and Stockholm. There had been a variety of attempts to end the war in Yemen, including the latest one by Saudi Arabia. Yet, the climate of oppression and lawlessness created by the Houthi militia was obstructing attempts at peace talks. One Houthi brigade was responsible for kidnapping girls and women, and the Ministry of Human Rights had investigated various such cases. The Houthi militia had established many rules, such as men and women not being allowed to be alone in a room together, and had blackmailed women through false allegations. In some cases, women and girls had been subjected to enforced disappearance, arbitrary arrest or abduction. A sharp increase in early marriage had been noted in the Houthi-controlled areas, and some parents felt compelled to marry off their daughters owing to poverty or for the preservation of their honour.

20. The Government was determined to make greater strides in advancing the situation of women. The many challenges facing Yemen were compounded by the ongoing war. Among the areas requiring specific attention was that of increasing the participation of women at all levels of decision-making. The Government recognized the importance of supporting women's rights in line with the Convention and in achieving full equality between men and women. He looked forward to listening to Committee members' observations and to a positive dialogue with the Committee.

21. The Government remained committed to protecting and reinforcing human rights and, with the support of the international community, to reviving all Government institutions and departments currently under the militia's control. It looked forward to receiving assistance from States and international organizations in order to alleviate the difficult circumstances of the Yemeni people.

22. **Ms. Haidar** said that the seven-year conflict in Yemen had had multiple repercussions on women and girls: domestic violence and honour crimes were still practised all over the country; the number of forced and child marriages had increased; and access to proper health services, especially sexual and reproductive health, had been drastically reduced. Vulnerable groups, such as women and girls with disabilities, female-headed households and internally displaced women and refugees also had to cope with intersectional discrimination. There had been a clear setback in terms of gender roles owing to the conflict, which placed a greater burden on women and girls, who remained responsible for fetching water, preparing food and looking after children and older persons.

23. Both parties to the conflict had continued to act with little regard for their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law to protect women from rape, sexual violence, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance. Most recently, the discontinuation of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts had raised grave concerns about the absence of an independent monitoring mechanism to deal with violations of human rights by all parties to the conflict.

24. Nearly 40 per cent of Yemeni families had been forced into debt to pay for essentials, given the irregular payment of wages by the Government in the areas it controlled and the failure to pay anything at all in the areas controlled by the de facto authorities. In the light of reports that the resources for paying those wages had actually been available, she would appreciate the delegation's explanation as to why those wages had not been paid.

25. The COVID-19 pandemic had increased the need for safe drinking water, and water prices had risen drastically, which meant that women and children had to travel longer

distances to obtain water from collection points. That, in turn, increased their vulnerability. The denial of the freedom of movement, such as the closure of the airport in Sanaa, or the requirement for a woman to be accompanied by a spouse or male guardian when performing day-to-day activities, had a negative impact on every area of a woman's private and public life.

26. She would appreciate information on the measures taken to address discrimination against women and girls in a meaningful way, to ensure accountability for violations, to prioritize humanitarian assistance and to ensure women's representation in political and public life. The Committee's general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations could provide guidance for the State party.

27. Despite the plethora of decrees issued by the Government, those instruments did not seem to have been translated into action on the ground to alleviate women's suffering. Since the formulation of the draft constitution of 2015 during the National Dialogue Conference, in which women had been well represented, there had been a variety of setbacks. For example, the Committee was concerned that the new constitution did not recognize equality between women and men, given its description of women in article 31 as "sisters of man" who had rights and duties under Islamic law. She asked whether Yemen would consider formulating a proper definition of discrimination against women and whether there was a timetable for the adoption of the draft constitution and the associated amendment of all discriminatory laws.

28. Women in Yemen faced many barriers to their access to justice. Those included legal illiteracy, lack of guidance, lengthy procedures, prohibitive costs and the unavailability of identity and other documentation as a result of displacement or migration. How did the State party intend to remove those barriers?

29. **Ms. Ameline**, noting the State party's draft national action plan on women and peace and security, said that she wished to know whether a timeline for its implementation had been set. She commended the State party on its inclusion of the rights of women in the recent report of the National Commission of Inquiry, which had not previously taken account of violations of those specific rights. It would be useful to have further information on how women's rights violations, such as sexual violence, abduction and other barbarous acts, were documented and what care was provided for victims. She wondered whether there was a mechanism in place to receive complaints and whether the State party still planned to establish a special court to try persons for such crimes. It would be helpful to know whether there was a compensation fund for victims. She asked how the State party would ensure that the 30 per cent quota for women in all government positions, delegations and committees, which had been adopted at the National Dialogue Conference, was respected in order to guarantee women's role in rebuilding the country.

30. **Ms. Saleh** (Yemen) said that the National Commission for Women comprised representatives of various ministries and its aim was to devise national policies and strategies concerning women's issues. The Commission had recently restarted its activities, which had been disrupted by the war. The Ministry of Justice had introduced a programme that offered legal aid to women on low incomes and a national network had been set up composed of representatives of various ministries and civil society organizations to guarantee access to justice for women. Recent legislative changes meant that child marriage was now prohibited and women were able to pass their nationality on to their foreign husbands. Education was compulsory and free of charge for girls, regardless of whether they lived in rural or urban areas. Schools had been set up for girls, with all the necessary amenities, including water and sanitation facilities.

31. Work on the draft national action plan on women and peace and security had started in 2018. It had been supported by all ministries, including the Ministry of Social Affairs, but its launch had been delayed owing to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Discussions with donors and other relevant stakeholders were currently under way, and the National Commission for Women was working with the relevant ministries and civil society organizations with a view to implementing the plan in the near future. Workshops and meetings had been organized to raise awareness of the importance of women's participation

in decision-making and conflict resolution, in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

32. Bodies such as the National Commission of Inquiry into human rights violations and the Ministry of Human Rights documented violations of women's rights in a central database. The police had special units that received complaints throughout the country. There was currently no compensation fund for victims of rights violations.

33. **Mr. Ebrahim** (Yemen) said that complaints offices, which were run by the Ministry of Human Rights and the National Commission of Inquiry, received reports of human rights violations. Compensation had been paid to a number of women who had been liberated from the prisons of the Houthi militias and the Government was reaching out to international organizations for funding to provide compensation to more women and men who had been freed, many of whom needed health care and psychological support.

34. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and the Under-Secretary-General sought to organize dialogues with all stakeholders to end the conflict. However, women were not sufficiently represented in the delegations involved in the negotiation process partly because the political parties that comprised those delegations had few female members. The Ministry of Human Rights had held meetings with various parties to encourage them to increase participation of women leadership and decision-making roles, with some success.

35. **Ms. Haidar** said that she wished to hear the State party's plans and proposals to ensure that women and children had priority access to humanitarian assistance. She wondered what measures had been taken to increase the effective participation of women in decision-making at all levels and in areas other than peace and security.

36. **Ms. Ameline** said that the State party would do well to use the Committee's general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations as a road map for the implementation of the plan on women and peace and security in order to tap into women's potential for conflict resolution.

37. **Mr. Ebrahim** (Yemen) said that the President had established a high-level body to coordinate relief work, which was chaired by the Minister of Local Administration and comprised representatives of government ministries and civil society organizations. One of the major difficulties faced was that some international organizations, until recently, had been operating in Sana'a and the humanitarian aid that had arrived there had been stolen by the Houthi militias.

38. **Ms. Rana** said that she would like to know what efforts had been made to accelerate the establishment of an independent national institution for the promotion and protection of human rights that complied with the Paris Principles. It would be useful to have information on the steps taken to reactivate the National Commission for Women in the provisional capital, Aden, mobilize its operating budget and activate the branches of the general directorates for women's affairs in each governmental institution, with all necessary authority and resources. She wondered what action had been taken to renew the mandate of the National Commission of Inquiry, which had ended in August 2021, ensure the involvement of women in the Commission's work and enhance protection mechanisms for women human rights defenders and political activists. She would be interested to know how the Government would ensure that gender experts were appointed to work on the Commission's gender mainstreaming strategy and whether women would be consulted. Would the strategy include the development of a system for referring women who had been victims of gender-based violence to legal aid and protection services and shelters? She wished to hear about the composition of the ad hoc committee to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. She asked what services it provided, whether women were represented and whether the resources allocated to it would be increased in order to mitigate the pandemic's impact on women.

39. **Ms. Akizuki** said that she would be interested to know whether the State party intended to introduce any temporary measures in areas where de facto or substantive equality between men and women had not been achieved, including education, employment, health care and the participation of women in political and public life.

40. **Ms. Saleh** (Yemen) said that the headquarters of the National Commission for Women had been reopened and staff had been recruited. The Commission had sent an official letter to the cabinet requesting the reactivation of the Supreme Council for Women's Affairs, which would be considered at an upcoming cabinet meeting.

41. The Commission had conducted two studies in order to determine the best mechanism to ensure that quotas for women's representation in political parties and other official positions were met. It had reminded political parties of the 30 per cent quota; however, some parties were not functioning as normal owing to the conflict and had failed to comply. Women had played an important part in combating the pandemic. For example, the spokesperson of the committee for combating COVID-19 was a woman.

42. **Mr. Qasem** (Yemen) said that three of the eight members of the National Commission of Inquiry were women. Its mandate had been extended by two years and it received support from the international community and the Government. It investigated all cases of human rights violations and abuses across the country and had referred 3,000 cases to the Office of the Public Prosecutor.

43. **Ms. Basamad** (Yemen) said that, despite its limited resources, the Government was striving to alleviate the joint impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, flooding and the war on the categories of vulnerable person most affected by those crises, including older persons, children, women, persons with specific needs and persons with disabilities. It had ensured the distribution of medicine, including some vaccines, and had organized awareness workshops on steps that members of the public could take to avoid contracting COVID-19. One specific measure taken to support women had been changes to their working hours. A hotline had been set up. Databases had been established to record data, including the number of cases; the resulting statistics were extremely accurate. Studies had been conducted in partnership with international organizations and Aden University. Working with UNICEF, the Government had appointed social workers to engage directly with women affected by COVID-19 and had organized gender-responsive training sessions.

44. **Ms. Rana**, noting with satisfaction the fact that the National Commission of Inquiry had brought 3,000 cases to the Office of the Public Prosecutor, said that she wished to know whether, under the system in Yemen, referrals were made to services such as legal aid, shelters and protection services for persons who had experienced gender-based violence.

45. **Mr. Qasem** (Yemen) said that the National Commission of Inquiry had organized some hearings to enable victims to be heard and appropriate referrals for help to be made; for instance, those with injuries might be referred to Médecins sans frontières or the International Committee of the Red Cross. Referrals could also be made to the Ministry of Housing. Women working in the fields were often injured by mines; those cases were referred to the centre responsible for such injuries.

46. **Ms. Saleh** (Yemen) said that the National Commission for Women monitored all violations against women affected by the war, providing them with psychosocial support. The Commission also visited the camps for internally displaced persons, providing women with logistical and psychosocial support.

47. **Ms. Gabr**, noting the prevalence of negative stereotypes about women in Yemeni society and of the resulting discriminatory and harmful practices towards them, such as the requirement for a woman to seek her husband's permission to leave the home, said that it would be useful to hear whether national workshops and awareness campaigns would be run to break such stereotypes. Details of the implementation of the law prohibiting female genital mutilation would be appreciated too. It was very important for a single law to be in place to ensure that the minimum legal age of marriage for girls and boys, with or without parental consent, was established at 18 years.

48. Given that some legislation – for instance one law dating from 1994 – provided for persons found guilty of killing a woman or a girl merely having to pay her male relatives compensation, were there any plans for a specific law prohibiting all forms of killing of women and girls? In that connection, she wondered whether the parliament would be convened in Aden so that it could consider amending such legislation.

49. Since the armed conflict had driven some women to seek jobs, she wished to know what means of protection there were for women exposed to sexual violence in the labour market. It was unclear whether the country's four shelters for women really had capacity to receive the women who needed them. In particular, she wished to know whether a hotline and social workers, doctors and psychosocial support staff were available. Lastly, she would appreciate further details of the authorities responsible for the administration of justice and follow-up to cases of abuse.

50. **Ms. Leinarte**, detailing the various forms of trafficking in persons and prostitution prevalent in Yemen and the different socioeconomic and cultural factors behind such exploitation, said that it remained impossible for the Government to combat trafficking adequately or collect related data owing to the absence of any law criminalizing it. Another problem was the lack of a national plan and the absence of any early identification and referral mechanism to assist and protect victims. The awareness-raising workshops on trafficking mentioned by the delegation could represent a road map for the newly established National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking to follow. She would appreciate further details on what the Committee had done to date and on whether it had adequate human and financial resources to coordinate the efforts to combat trafficking in persons. While there was no doubt that trafficking had been encouraged by the war and humanitarian crisis, existing harmful laws and stereotypes in Yemeni society needed to be countered if trafficking was to be eliminated after peace had been achieved.

51. **Ms. Saleh** (Yemen) said that the National Commission for Women engaged with civil society to run awareness-raising programmes on issues such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation. The outcome documents of the National Dialogue Conference included provisions banning female genital mutilation, setting the minimum legal age for marriage at 18 and establishing the right to one year's paid maternity leave, rather than the two months to which women were currently entitled; those measures would be enshrined in the new constitution. Although progress had been made on eliminating forced marriage and female genital mutilation, such practices were still entrenched because of the war and poverty; fearing for their daughters' futures, families sought marriages for them. It was rare for women to have to be accompanied by a male guardian when leaving her home. That was a tradition with no religious basis that persisted only in the most remote regions of Yemen.

52. **Mr. Qasem** (Yemen) said that, under a Decree of the Ministry of Health of 2001, female genital mutilation had been prohibited in all health facilities. Pursuant to article 278 of the Criminal Code, prostitution was punishable by custodial sentences of 3 years and by a fine for those involved in prostitution who exploited women.

53. The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking worked with the Ministry of Human Rights, along with other ministries; non-governmental organizations were also represented. A number of meetings had been organized in Aden.

54. The Ministry of Human Rights had worked with the National Commission for Women to bring before the parliament a bill to combat violence against women and children. The bill was awaiting enactment and the Ministry was doing awareness-raising work in that connection. Workshops were being held to combat violence against women. The Commission had also successfully championed amendments to legislation on nationality, personal status, the education of children, the custody of children up to 9 years of age and guardianship.

55. **Mr. Ebrahim** (Yemen) said that the Government was absolutely committed to amending legislation and provisions that were discriminatory towards women. A number of resolutions and bills to improve the situation of women would be before the parliament at its next session, which the Government hoped would be held soon.

#### *Articles 7-9*

56. **Ms. Akizuki** said that the Committee was concerned that, despite women's right to vote being guaranteed under the Elections Law, they were hardly represented in political and public life. She wondered what measures the State party was taking to address women's lack of representation in all branches of government, in particular in decision-making positions. She wished to know whether the Government intended to introduce the minimum quota of

30 per cent of women in the public and political spheres. She would appreciate information about any measures to protect female candidates in elections from gender-based violence, threats and unethical campaigns that posed serious challenges to their political participation.

57. She hoped to hear whether the State party undertook capacity-building programmes on the importance of women's participation in decision-making, targeting all relevant State officials, employers and political parties. It would be helpful to know what kind of awareness-raising measures the Government was taking to eliminate discriminatory stereotypes on the roles of women and men in public and political life. She wondered whether there were any mentoring programmes on leadership and negotiation skills for women in the public sector.

58. She would be interested to hear whether the Government intended to introduce the quota system for involving women in peace negotiations, the political process, conflict resolution, national reconciliation and reconstruction efforts. She wished to know whether any measures had been taken to incorporate a gender perspective into the peace agenda. She wondered whether formal consultations with women – including rural women and conflict survivors – played a part in the negotiation process, with a view to ensuring that their priorities were addressed in any political settlement.

59. **Ms. Gabr** said that it was unclear whether article 59 of the Criminal Code concerning honour killing was still in force; if not, she recommended that consideration should be given to revoking that provision during the next session of the parliament. In relation to future legislation pertaining to women and violence against women, the Government might study the good practices in neighbouring countries that shared the same values and cultural context as Yemen.

60. **Ms. Peláez Narváez**, outlining discriminatory provisions in the legislation of Yemen in respect of nationality and their potential for causing statelessness, said that she wished to know whether the State party intended to enact reforms to eliminate gender-based discrimination in its legislation on nationality. She would welcome details of any plans to make the law retroactive by extending the period during which Yemeni women could pass on citizenship to their children. She wondered whether the State party intended to eliminate the requirement for Yemeni women to apply for prior authorization from the Ministry of the Interior to marry a foreigner. It would be interesting to hear whether the Government intended to train judicial and law enforcement officials to ensure that Yemeni women enjoyed the right, in practice, to pass citizenship on to their children on an equal footing with Yemeni men.

61. She hoped to hear whether the State party intended to introduce reforms to ensure that women who acquired Yemeni nationality through marriage were entitled to retain their citizenship if the marriage ended, regardless of the length of the marriage. She wondered whether the State party had plans to improve procedures to provide civil documentation to internally displaced persons and raise such persons' awareness of their human rights and their right to access public services. She would appreciate any gender-disaggregated data that might be available on the number of stateless persons in Yemen. Did the State party intend to accede to and fully implement the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness?

62. Lastly, she wished to know whether the Government planned to repeal article 4 (b) of the Nationality Law, which prohibited children with disabilities from obtaining Yemeni nationality.

63. **Mr. Ebrahim** (Yemen) said that the new constitution and other legislation guaranteed women's equal right to vote and to stand for election. All committees involved in the National Dialogue Conference had observed the 30 per cent quota for women's representation, producing excellent results, and the committee that had drafted the new constitution had counted 4 women among its 17 members. The draft constitution addressed many matters relevant to women, although the passing of new anti-discrimination laws had been hindered by the suspension of the parliament during the conflict. The granting of nationality to foreign nationals married to Yemeni citizens was based on the principle of reciprocity. In other words, the same laws were applied in such cases as the laws of the country of the foreign national in question. The Government had instructed administrative bodies to cease the illegal

practice of requiring women to be accompanied by male guardians when obtaining passports and identity documents.

64. **Ms. Saleh** (Yemen) said that one of the outcome decisions of the National Dialogue Conference was to grant Yemeni women married to non-Yemeni men the right to transmit their nationality to their children. It was hoped that legislation to that effect would be submitted to the parliament in the near future.

65. **Mr. Qasem** (Yemen) said that, under the amended Nationality Law, if a Yemeni woman divorced a foreign man or became responsible for their children, those children were granted Yemeni nationality until the age of 18, at which point they must choose between Yemeni nationality or the father's nationality. The Women's National Committee had drafted a list of legislation that must be amended, and there were plans to review the compliance of all legislation with the international instruments to which Yemen was a party.

66. **Ms. Haidar** said that she would welcome clarification of the nationality of children born to Yemeni women and non-Muslim foreigners.

67. **Ms. Akizuki** asked whether future reconciliation efforts would involve women and consider their needs.

68. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** asked whether the State party intended to accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. She would welcome statistics on the number of stateless men and women in Yemen and asked whether the State party intended to amend legislation that prevented children with disabilities born to foreign parents from receiving Yemeni citizenship.

69. **Mr. Ebrahim** (Yemen) said that the amended Nationality Law allowed Yemeni women to transmit their nationality to their children, a right also recognized in the new constitution. The Ministry of Human Rights had recommended that reconciliation efforts should involve women so as to achieve real peace and growth.

70. **Ms. Leinarte** asked whether the State party envisaged adopting criminal law provisions on trafficking in persons and whether the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking was operational.

71. **Mr. Ebrahim** (Yemen) said that the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, which had been operational for around 10 years, organized workshops and training sessions, including training on trafficking for judges and prosecutors. Trafficking in persons was a particular problem in wartime and, while the recruitment of children to the army was illegal, 30,000 children had been recruited by the Houthi militias, who had also forced girls into early marriage, which was also prohibited. A draft law on trafficking in persons had been submitted to the parliament. He hoped that amendments to the provisions on disability and citizenship would be considered in the near future.

72. **Ms. Haidar** asked whether foreign husbands must be Muslim in order to acquire Yemeni nationality.

73. **Mr. Ebrahim** (Yemen) said that under sharia, Muslim women were not permitted to marry non-Muslims.

74. **Mr. Qasem** (Yemen) said that there were no legislative provisions governing the religion of foreign husbands.

75. **Ms. Haidar** said that other Arab States whose source of legislation was sharia, including Tunisia and Morocco, had acknowledged marriage between Muslim women and non-Muslim men.

#### *Articles 10–14*

76. **Ms. Narain** said that she wished to know how the authorities would address the disproportionately high illiteracy rate among women and girls, ensure that girls could attend school in safety and reduce dropout rates among them. She asked whether girls forced to leave school early would benefit from programmes to address gaps in their education,

whether scholarships would be provided for girls based on academic performance or need and whether the 2007 decision to abolish school fees would be implemented.

77. She wished to know the following: how the State party would address the persistent cultural and financial barriers to girls' education, such as the non-payment of teachers' salaries, destruction of schools and lack of female teachers; whether it would ensure that schools offered a safe, sanitary place for education that took into account the needs of girls with disabilities; and whether consideration would be given to the safe transportation of girls to and from schools. She asked when teachers' salaries would be paid, whether their safety would be guaranteed and whether more women teachers would be recruited in conservative areas to respond to the concerns of girls' parents. Lastly, she wished to know whether remote learning had been implemented during the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic and, if so, whether girls had access to the necessary devices and to the Internet, particularly in rural areas.

78. **Ms. Basamad** (Yemen) said that some of her Government's strategies in the education sector had been suspended during the conflict. Nevertheless, it had worked to rebuild schools, pay and train teachers, develop teaching programmes and reform university education, including to align teaching programmes with the needs of the labour market. Teachers were being deployed in rural areas, and a number of studies that had been suspended owing to the pandemic had resumed. In response to the pandemic, teaching hours had been reduced and older teachers were not required to attend schools in person.

79. **Mr. Ebrahim** (Yemen) said that in areas under militia control children were prevented from going to school and the militias refused to pay teachers' salaries in full. The militias had also imposed high taxes and school fees, rendering poor families unable to send their children to school, despite legislation in Yemen that guaranteed free education. While the Government had adopted various COVID-19 response measures in areas under its control, the militias had vowed not to recognize the pandemic and prohibited all mention of it. The militias had also refused to accept COVID-19 vaccines donated by other States, and he called upon the international community to assist in resolving the situation.

80. **Ms. Stott Despoja** said that she wished to know whether the State party envisaged amending article 40 of the Personal Status Act, which arguably impeded work opportunities for women, and whether it planned to address the gender pay gap by enforcing the Labour Code or introducing temporary special measures. She asked whether maternity leave would be increased to 14 weeks and whether measures would be introduced to support women-led private sector initiatives, microeconomic initiatives, small-scale industries and social entrepreneurship. She also asked: whether the State party would criminalize sexual harassment in the workplace; what mechanisms existed to report discrimination against women in the workplace; whether those mechanisms were safe and accessible; what protections and support existed for working women; whether amendments to the Labour Code were planned to protect them; and whether there were plans to collect data on their employment, particularly in the informal economy. She wished to know whether efforts had been made to include domestic workers in labour legislation, what immediate temporary special measures the State party would consider to promote women's economic empowerment, particularly in the informal sector, and what measures had been adopted to improve protection for women by the Social Welfare Fund, including the restoration of access to basic social services.

81. **Mr. Ebrahim** (Yemen) said that the recommendations made by the National Dialogue Conference on women's employment would inform future legislative reform.

82. **Ms. Saleh** (Yemen) said that legislation did not discriminate between men and women with regard to salaries. Under the new constitution, paid maternity leave, which currently lasted two months following vaginal births and three months following caesarean births, would be extended to one year on full pay followed by six months on half pay. The Government was developing strategies on the economic empowerment of women with small businesses. Under Yemeni law, women could sign contracts and manage their finances and property. Job opportunities were offered to women and men on an equal footing. The State provided interest-free loans to women entrepreneurs and assisted them in registering their

businesses. Nevertheless, the current situation in Yemen had seen women's employment in the private sector fall.

83. **Ms. Basamad** (Yemen) said that the Ministry of Social Affairs had developed questionnaires relating to salaries. Salary discrepancies in the private sector did not stem from discrimination, but from differences in length of service and qualifications.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*