



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Eighty-second session

Summary record of the 1898th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 24 June 2022, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Acosta Vargas

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

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

Seventh periodic report of the Plurinational State of Bolivia (continued)
([CEDAW/C/BOL/7](#); [CEDAW/C/BOL/Q/7](#); [CEDAW/C/BOL/RQ/7](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Plurinational State of Bolivia joined the meeting.*

Articles 1–6

2. **Ms. Prada Tejada** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that trafficking in persons for the following purposes was punished under Bolivian law: the sale of human organs; labour exploitation, forced labour or any form of servitude; sex tourism; commercial sexual exploitation; forced marriage; adoption; the recruitment of persons for participation in armed conflict or religious sects; the employment of persons in criminal or unlawful activities; and unlawful biomedical research. Multidisciplinary specialized teams, including representatives of the police and the Public Prosecutor's Office, were responsible for investigating trafficking in persons, and there were a number of bilateral agreements with neighbouring countries in that regard. The Directorate General for Combating Human Trafficking and Smuggling had implemented a number of activities in conjunction with other key bodies, including awareness-raising and prevention workshops that focused in particular on those most at risk of being victims of trafficking, such as migrants, women, boys, girls and adolescents. In addition, webinars were held, in which experts in the field of trafficking and smuggling exchanged relevant information. As a key part of security and welfare programmes, observatories that maintained records of complaints and cases of trafficking or smuggling involving Bolivian citizens had been established. Within the justice system, the Ministry of the Interior kept a record of all cases involving trafficking in persons or smuggling that came to its attention, including those being prosecuted. In 2022 there were 148 persons serving sentences for crimes of trafficking in persons or smuggling, 119 of whom were in pretrial detention, or awaiting trial, and 29 had already been convicted and sentenced. That represented an increase compared to 2020, when 93 persons had been in pretrial detention for crimes of trafficking in persons, and 22 had been sentenced and convicted. A unit of the Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency was specialized in work to combat trafficking in persons and smuggling. Act No. 263 provided the framework for all efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

3. **A representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia**, speaking via video link, said that, on 29 May 2022, the Plurinational Council to Combat Trafficking in Persons had adopted a new policy to counter trafficking in persons and smuggling, including that of migrants, and related crimes, to cover the period 2022–2025, based on a holistic approach that was fully in line with international standards. The policy had a cross-cutting gender focus and featured a number of key guidelines, including care for victims of trafficking and mechanisms to ensure victims were not criminalized and the incorporation of human rights. Local and regional authorities were also an important part of efforts to combat trafficking in persons. Foreign policy initiatives to counter trafficking and smuggling had focused on awareness-raising and education, a number of prevention measures had concentrated on relatives of trafficked persons, sex workers, hotel workers and those working in the tourism sector, and the media were obliged to broadcast government messages aimed at combating trafficking in persons. Progress had been made in ratification of and accession to bilateral and multilateral treaties in the field of trafficking in persons and smuggling, most recently with Argentina and Peru. Efforts were under way to set up a database to monitor trafficking in persons, involving all key actors, including the Plurinational Council to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Statistics on the number of complaints of trafficking or smuggling, and the number of those prosecuted, arrested, or in prison would be provided in writing, disaggregated by various categories, including gender. While prostitution was not prohibited, it was true that a legal protection framework was necessary to ensure that all Bolivian citizens, whether at home or abroad, benefited from guaranteed support from the State, and

protection from violence. Steps were being taken to prevent the sexual exploitation of women and ensure the provision of health care, regardless of their activity.

Articles 7–9

4. **Ms. Manalo** said that she had been pleased to note the progress made in the participation of women in public and political life, including the fact that women accounted for 51 per cent of the national legislature, 45 per cent of departmental assemblies and 51 per cent of municipal councils. However, according to the Asociación de Concejalas de Bolivia, there had been 113 cases of sexual harassment and violence against female municipal councillors in 2018, and she wished to know how such cases had been dealt with. What was the State party doing to prevent such harassment and to ensure there were no reprisals against whistle-blowers? She wished to know whether the cases of harassment had been condemned in court decisions, and whether there had been any convictions. If so, she would like details of the sentences handed down. She also wished to know whether women's political participation was rising in rural areas, where it had been lagging behind. If it was, she would appreciate details, and if not, she would like to know what impediments stood in the way of progress.

5. **Ms. Prada Tejada** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that great progress in gender equality had been made in terms of the political representation of women. Full participation of women in political life at all levels was a constitutional requirement, and considerable legislation and regulations had been introduced to tackle political harassment and violence against them, including Act No. 243, which provided for punishment for offences of political harassment and political violence against women. In addition, Act No. 1096 on political organizations provided that all political organizations and parties were required to have a gender policy to ensure the best interests and well-being of women and to take steps to ensure equal participation in all activities. A mechanism existed whereby women politicians could obtain immediate support when they reported harassment or violence, particularly when it was politically based. That was backed up by a cross-cutting approach between institutions and a network of female heads of ministerial-level institutions responsible for drafting policy and deciding on the steps to be taken when cases of harassment were reported. In the period 2017–2020, the Supreme Electoral Court had issued a number of rulings to guarantee access on an equal footing and equal participation of women in electoral processes. A gender unit had been established in 2017, which pursued actions to prevent and follow up on cases of political violence and harassment. Rules were in force on the handling and processing of reports of political violence and harassment, particularly those received from women who were candidates or who had been elected and were already exercising political duties. Those steps had been taken to ensure a more streamlined process for reporting cases of violence and harassment and to facilitate access to justice. Support was provided to women who reported such actions, while the cases were still being investigated and the hearings were ongoing.

6. To support women in public political office, as part of a preventive approach, awareness-raising workshops on the need to address harassment and violence, and on implementation of the relevant legislation, were run in the different ministries in which women worked. In 2020, such awareness-raising sessions had been held with the Supreme Electoral Court, and with elected officials from various state bodies and organs. Talks were held with bodies responsible for legislation and electoral issues at the national and regional levels of government to improve the mechanism for follow-up of reports and complaints and ensure that the sanctions for offences were commensurate with the seriousness of the offence. Gender equality, however, extended beyond the political sphere, and the Government's aim was to ensure parity and equality in daily life in the entire country, including in the Andean communities. One way of ensuring that men and women were equal partners and had equal voices in decision-making processes was to link gender equality and gender parity with intercultural matters. The Government was therefore making efforts to ensure equal representation of all women, including those from the different ethnic communities and indigenous and aboriginal campesino nations and peoples in the country.

7. **A representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia**, speaking via video link, said that in July 2022 a mechanism would be launched to protect women who lodged complaints

of harassment under the reporting system provided for in the legislation on political harassment.

Articles 10–14

8. **Ms. Stott Despoja**, speaking on behalf of Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen, said that she wished to know whether comprehensive sex education was being taught in schools and, if so, what methods were used to teach it. She wondered whether sex education was limited to the biological aspects of sex or whether it included information on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender stereotyping and the prevention of gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

9. The Government might describe any measures being taken to protect girls against sexual violence in schools and ensure that pregnant girls were able to remain in school and resume their education after they had given birth. The Committee would be interested to know how the State party encouraged girls to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics and what it did to overcome differences in the quality and availability of education in urban and rural areas.

10. Noting that the State party had established that at least 20 per cent of persons studying at teacher training colleges must be members of Afro-Bolivian communities or indigenous and aboriginal campesino nations and peoples, she asked what impact that quota had on the education of girls belonging to those communities. She would also be grateful to learn how school curricula were being adapted to promote bilingual and intercultural education.

11. **Ms. Prada Tejada** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that the sex education curriculum included content on sexual and reproductive rights and the use of contraception. Over 1,000 teachers had participated in supplementary training courses on sexual and reproductive rights, sexual orientation, gender identity and the prevention of HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy. The Ministry of Education had published educational materials for use in training courses on sexual and reproductive health, including family planning. However, the Government acknowledged that further training courses would have to be developed to ensure that all teachers, students and parents were properly informed about such matters. The Gender, Generational and Social Justice Team of the Ministry of Education had drawn up a proposal for a comprehensive curriculum on sex education that was in the process of being adopted.

12. The Ministry of Health and Sports provided training to health-care staff on sexual and reproductive rights, contraception, the use of mifepristone and misoprostol to interrupt pregnancy and the use of different kinds of post-partum birth control. In 2020, awareness-raising campaigns on contraception had been conducted in the country's nine departments and online courses on sexual and reproductive health-care standards for persons with disabilities had been delivered.

13. Supreme Decrees No. 1302 and No. 1320 provided for the establishment of mechanisms to protect girls and boys against violence, ill-treatment and abuse in schools. To ensure the implementation of those decrees, defence lawyers working for the departmental directorates of education provided legal support to student victims of sexual violence. Currently, legal action was being taken against over 480 teachers, over 70 of whom had been removed from the education system.

14. Since 2015, efforts had made to strengthen policies intended to prevent teenage pregnancy. As a result, the teenage pregnancy rate had fallen significantly in recent years. Given the scale of the problem, however, further efforts would have to be made to reduce the rate still further. The Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency, in coordination with the Ministry of Health and Sports, had conducted a campaign to prevent sexual violence and teenage pregnancy that linked schools and health services and established mechanisms for the prevention of teenage pregnancy in the country's nine departments. Legislative measures had been taken to guarantee the right to education for pregnant girls and girls who had given birth. As a result, the school dropout rate had fallen.

15. Under the Avelino Siñani-Elizardo Pérez Education Act (No. 070 of 20 December 2010), a plurinational model of education had been established, according to which regional

curricula tailored to the sociocultural and linguistic characteristics of each community were developed, allowing each community to affirm and develop its cultural identity, history, world view, language and knowledge. To date, the Afro-Bolivian communities and the indigenous and aboriginal campesino nations and peoples had developed 26 regional curricula that had subsequently been adopted by the Ministry of Education. Other communities, nations and peoples were in the process of developing their curricula while a certain number had yet to begin the process.

16. The Ministry of Education, in coordination with the indigenous and aboriginal campesino nations and peoples, had published school textbooks in 28 different indigenous and aboriginal languages. In order to promote the recovery of languages, wisdom and knowledge, 29 alphabets of indigenous and aboriginal languages had been systematized and published and the grammars of the Guaraní, Aymara and Quechua languages had been codified. During the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, television and radio broadcasts had been used to continue educating children in indigenous and aboriginal languages. In 2021, however, when the de facto Government had been in power, the learning process had been severely interrupted. Once democracy had been restored, the Government had declared that the right to education would be ensured for every community, nation and people in every part of the country. Efforts to produce educational materials in indigenous and aboriginal languages for the different levels of the education system were ongoing.

17. In 2006, when the Movimiento al Socialismo had first come to power, one of its key goals had been to increase access to education for the many people who had historically been denied such access. Between 2006 and 2019, the gap in the illiteracy rates for men and women aged between 15 and 24 years had fallen and the number of women who had graduated from a State university had increased significantly. Currently, more women than men graduated from State universities. Since 2006, the Juancito Pinto grant has been a key factor in enhancing access to education and preventing school dropout. The school dropout rate for girls had fallen from 6 per cent in 2006 to 2.3 per cent in 2019. In recent years, the difference in the school enrolment rates for boys and girls had all but disappeared.

18. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that she wished to know what was being done to ensure that girls who had given birth were able to return to school. She asked what measures were being taken to address the high illiteracy rates among older women, Afro-Bolivian women and indigenous women, particularly in rural areas. The delegation might describe any steps being taken to enhance access to technology for rural women, a significant proportion of whom had never used the Internet.

19. **Ms. Prada Tejada** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that the Ministry of the Office of the President, together with the Ministry of Education and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), were implementing a programme to reduce digital gender divides in urban and rural areas and to encourage girls to study science, technology, mathematics and engineering. Under the programme, which was made up of five projects, free-of-charge robotics classes would be taught to girls, science camps would be held to promote scientific leadership among girls, print and audiovisual material would be produced to raise awareness of women role models in science and technology, a study of digital gender divides in Bolivia would be conducted and a strategy for reducing such divides would be implemented. The success of the Government's efforts to encourage girls to study science was reflected by the fact that, in recent years, girls had won a number of national science awards.

20. One of the responsibilities of the Agency of Electronic Government and Information and Communication Technologies was to reduce the digital gender divide and promote the technological sovereignty of the Plurinational State of Bolivia. To that end, technological innovation and training centres were being opened in different departments around the country.

21. **Ms. Bonifaz Alfonso** said that she wished to know whether any measures were being taken to combat informal employment and underemployment, which primarily affected women. She wondered what the State party was doing to break down harmful stereotypes relating to women's role in society, according to which they were primarily expected to bear and raise children and carry out household chores. It would be interesting to know whether the Government would implement a policy to encourage men to share responsibility for

childcare and household chores so that women could better balance their professional and family lives.

22. The Committee would be grateful to know the outcome of the “My First Decent Job” programme and the results achieved under the Act on Employment and Financial Assistance for Persons with Disabilities. It would also welcome information on any measures being taken to implement the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). In view of the fact that over 28 per cent of children aged between 15 and 17 years were engaged in some form of work, the delegation might describe any measures being taken to ensure that children remained in education and that ILO standards on child labour were upheld.

23. **Ms. Chalal** said that the State party had undeniably made progress in ensuring greater access to health-care services for girls and women. However, despite the many policies and initiatives that had been adopted, the Government’s efforts were still falling short in a number of areas. In particular, she wished to know what measures the State party intended to take in response to the urgent need to reduce the unacceptably high teenage pregnancy rate. It would also be helpful to know whether education and awareness-raising campaigns were conducted, including in indigenous languages, on the risks associated with teenage pregnancy and the impact of becoming a mother on the lives of girls. She would be interested to know whether the State party had any plans to provide free access to male and female contraception without a prescription, particularly for women with disabilities, indigenous women and women in rural areas. In general, the Committee urged the State party to adopt specific legislation aimed at guaranteeing the right to sexual and reproductive health services for all citizens, particularly women in rural areas. In that regard, she also wished to know whether the State party would consider developing telemedicine services as a means of bringing health-care support to the most isolated communities.

24. It would be interesting to know whether the State party intended to amend its legislation to decriminalize abortion, either across the board or at least in cases of threats to the life or health of the mother, rape, incest and serious impairment of the fetus. She also wished to understand what was being done to ensure that abortion services were made available in practice for women who met the current legal criteria and whether any steps had been taken to abolish the requirement of judicial authorization for access to abortion in cases of rape or incest.

25. The Committee would welcome further information on any measures that the Government intended to take to reduce the number of HIV infections in the State party, particularly among vulnerable groups such as young people, female sex workers and lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons. She also wished to know whether free screening tests were provided and what was being done to ensure that infected persons had access without discrimination to adequate health-care services.

26. **Ms. Prada Tejada** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that reducing the teenage pregnancy rate had been made a government priority and that a number of public institutions were working together to formulate a national policy on teenage pregnancy. The Ministry of Education had also adopted a resolution aimed at ensuring that pregnant adolescent girls continued to enjoy access to education.

27. The prevalence of unsafe abortions was one of the main factors behind the high maternal mortality rate. Much progress had nonetheless been made with respect to ensuring the right to abortion for women in her country. For example, the right of women to timely and quality health-care services, including legal and safe abortions, had been enshrined in Plurinational Constitutional Court Ruling No. 0206/2014. However, there was still a lot of social and cultural stigma attached to abortion. Health-care professionals were sometimes reluctant to carry out abortions and campaigners affiliated with the Catholic Church used any means possible to prevent such procedures from taking place. The Government condemned such interventions and was fully committed to ensuring the implementation of national legislation on abortion.

28. The National Commission on the Monitoring of Cases of Femicide, which was composed of high-level representatives of the Office of the Ombudsman, the Public Prosecution Service and the national police, had been created by the Ministry of Justice and

Institutional Transparency in 2021. One of the aims of that body was to develop specific legislation on the right to sexual and reproductive health. A bill had already been drafted and would soon be submitted to the Plurinational Legislative Assembly. However, as with abortion, the proposal of a law on sexual and reproductive health had been met with strong resistance in certain quarters, by people who believed that such legislation only served to interfere with the natural development of children and teenagers. Further public awareness-raising campaigns and stronger international support were thus both required if the Government was to successfully push through and then implement the legislation.

29. Although the maternal mortality rate had fallen, the Government continued to take action to improve the care provided to women both during and after pregnancy. In 2021, thanks to a public investment of nearly 140 million bolivianos, over 106 million women had received the Juana Azurduy subsidy, which facilitated access to health-care services for pregnant women and mothers of young children. So far in 2022, over 40,000 women had registered for the subsidy. A similar number of women had also signed up since the start of the year for the Universal Prenatal “For Life” Subsidy. Over 44 million bolivianos had been invested in that scheme, which was aimed at ensuring that the health and nutritional needs of women were met during pregnancy.

30. **A representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia**, speaking via video link, said that a number of policies and initiatives to improve the access of girls and women to sexual and reproductive health services had been incorporated into the overall national health strategy. A total of 424 neighbourhood clinics and around 320 telemedicine centres had been set up to serve the most rural and isolated areas of the country. The services at those facilities, which were offered entirely free of charge under the Single Health System, included access to contraception and information on abortion. The Ministry of Health had also organized events across the country as part of an awareness-raising campaign on general health issues, including in relation to sexual and reproductive health.

31. The Ministry of Health had participated in a recent meeting organized by the Public Prosecutor’s Office in Sucre. On that occasion, discussions had been held on how to improve the implementation of the 2014 constitutional ruling on abortion. The previous year, the Ministry of Health had carried out capacity-building activities for around a thousand health-care professionals to ensure that they were aware of the government guidelines concerning abortion and the treatments available. Under the single health system, pregnant women who were legally entitled to an abortion could be prescribed mifepristone and misoprostol, which were very effective forms of medication used to bring about a medical abortion. The Ministry had also worked closely with non-governmental organizations on the issues of informed consent and conscientious objection. With regard to the latter, health-care professionals were entitled to refuse to carry out an abortion if that procedure ran counter to their personal beliefs or values. However, the role of the Ministry of Health was to ensure that legal and safe abortion procedures were available to women, as dictated by the Constitution. In cases of pregnancy as a result of rape, no judicial authorization was required; a copy of the formal complaint submitted to the authorities was sufficient to be referred for an abortion.

32. **A representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia**, speaking via video link, said that the Public Prosecutor’s Office and the Ministry of Health had worked together to develop an action plan on how best to give effect to national legislation on abortion. The aims of that action plan were to guarantee the best support and care to pregnant women, to avoid revictimization and to ensure that women who requested an abortion were not stigmatized. Plans had been made to publish a handbook for health-care professionals summarizing the key principles and aims of the action plan.

33. **Ms. Prada Tejada** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that a handbook on the provision of sexual and reproductive health services for persons with disabilities had been published in 2017. The Ministry of the Office of the President worked very closely with both public and private media organizations on how issues related to violence against women and sexual and reproductive health rights should be addressed and reported in the media.

34. **Ms. Bonifaz Alfonzo** said that she had not failed to notice that none of the members of the delegation had brought up the much-publicized case of the girl in Yapacaní who had been raped and had requested to terminate the resulting pregnancy. The confidentiality of her

personal information had not been respected and, as a result, religious groups had broken into the hospital to prevent her abortion from going ahead. Those events suggested that the problems surrounding abortion in the State party were much more serious than the delegation had indicated.

35. **Ms. Prada Tejada** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that the case in question did indeed demonstrate that all was not well in her country as far as abortions were concerned. The case had illustrated the problems that still existed in relation to how rape victims were treated in hospitals, to the ways in which the media reported such events and to the illegal interventions of organizations that were often affiliated with the Catholic Church. Following the case, the Office of the Ombudsman had initiated legal proceedings against all those who had played a role in denying the girl her rights. The Government had condemned the actions in the strongest possible terms and the “Girls, Not Mothers” campaign had been launched to raise public awareness about the issues that had been brought to light by the case.

36. **Ms. Bethel** said that the Committee would welcome further information on any steps taken by the State party to generate disaggregated data on female employment in rural and urban areas in order to establish public policies promoting the economic empowerment of women. She also wished to know what the State party was doing to establish a social protection system that covered the disproportionately high number of women in vulnerable employment, including domestic workers. It would be useful to learn if the State party had considered conducting a study on how citizens used their time, in order to strengthen its understanding of gender differences in time use and the different strategies that women and men used to earn their livelihoods. The results of such research could then be used in campaigns aimed at promoting the redistribution of care duties between men and women, monetizing unpaid care work and advancing the economic empowerment of women.

37. With respect to entrepreneurship, she wished to know what steps were being taken in the State party to teach women the digital skills they required to maintain and develop their businesses. The Committee would also welcome further information on the kinds of business that received support from the Seed Capital Fund, the proportion of women who benefited from that support and how exactly that initiative served to advance the economic empowerment of women. It would be useful to hear further details about the Productive Development Bank and the project carried out by ProBolivia to improve the quality of life of the women in the northern Amazonian region. She wished to know how the State party assessed the progress made under those initiatives, particularly in relation to the economic empowerment of women. Lastly, she would be interested to hear whether the State party would consider using temporary special measures to increase land ownership among women, especially in rural areas.

38. **Ms. Prada Tejada** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that, after the current Government had taken office following the coup d'état, steps had been taken to close the gender pay gap and ensure equal treatment of female workers. In 2020, the Government had introduced a hunger grant, from which over 2 million women had benefited, and the unemployment rate of women had halved since the end of the de facto Government. The legal retirement age for women was reduced by one year for every live-born child they had, up to a maximum of three years.

39. The President had adopted measures for the economic empowerment of women and to break cycles of violence and poverty, such as social housing programmes for women heads of households and victims of violence. Plans had been devised to increase the number of women working in the construction sector and monetary incentives were available for businesses where women comprised more than half of the workforce. Special certification had been awarded to companies that complied with the Government's standards regarding employment of women, and the Plurinational Service for Women and for Dismantling the Patriarchy had published a national diagnostic report on women's contribution to the economy through unpaid care work. The Productive Development Bank had set up special credit lines for women heads of household, to which over 475 million bolivianos had been allocated. There were also community-based initiatives that provided investment for women in the agricultural sector. Measures had been adopted in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women who

worked in the informal sector and to support vulnerable women by providing financing and training.

40. Significant progress had been made in guaranteeing the land rights of indigenous and aboriginal campesino women since Act No. 3545 had been passed in 2006. Almost half of all landowners were now women. A series of programmes had been launched, including the “Pachamama” Universal Agrarian Insurance scheme, to boost productivity and ensure the food sovereignty of indigenous and aboriginal campesino women in particular.

41. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that she wished to know what the State party was doing to eradicate structural poverty among women in rural areas, especially indigenous, aboriginal campesino and Afro-Bolivian women. She wondered whether assessments of the environmental impact on women of extractive and mining industry activities had been conducted and what measures were planned to ensure access to remedies and compensation for women affected by such activities. It would be useful to know what steps had been taken to improve women’s access to basic services such as reproductive health care and support for victims of gender-based violence. She would be interested to hear whether the State party had considered offering credit to women entrepreneurs in rural areas through State-owned financial institutions. She wondered whether the “Pachamama” Universal Agrarian Insurance scheme was available to the spouses of heads of household in the event of their death or disability. She would appreciate an explanation of the measures that the State party would take to review the cases of women who had been placed in pretrial detention for minor offences. She would like to know what steps the Government would take to combat violence in prisons, ensure that pregnant women received the necessary health care and prevent separation of detained women from their children.

42. She would be interested to learn what action the Government would take to guarantee the rights, especially those related to inheritance and social security, of lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons, who often suffered stigmatization and were not permitted to marry. She wondered what measures were in place to protect women with disabilities from violence and abuse and ensure that they had access to justice. She would be grateful for information about measures to protect young girls who performed dangerous jobs, such as gold mining and safeguard their right to an education. She wished to know what steps were being taken to end forced marriages between girls, many of whom had been victims of sexual abuse, and older men, especially in rural areas.

Articles 15 and 16

43. **Ms. Bethel** said that she would like to know what the time frame was for the enactment of legislation establishing a uniform age of marriage at 18 years for both men and women, whether any such law would be accompanied by a national public awareness-raising campaign to address the root causes of early and forced marriage, and whether the State party would consider conducting a research study to gather quantitative and qualitative data on the issue. She wondered whether support mechanisms would be introduced to offer pregnant girls access to legal abortion and whether programmes would be developed to create opportunities for young married women to continue education or vocational training and access gender-sensitive parenting courses, and to safeguard their rights to sexual and reproductive health care.

44. She would be interested to hear whether measures had been taken to harmonize inheritance legislation at the national and regional levels and ensure that the principle of non-discrimination applied to all women. She wondered how the State party ensured that women and men had the same marital rights and obligations, including in terms of succession, property rights and child custody. She wished to know whether the State party intended to align its definition of marriage with the non-discrimination principles under the Constitution and the 2014 Family and Family Procedure Code by recognizing marriages and civil unions between lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons.

45. **The Chair**, expressing her appreciation for the delegation’s replies to the Committee’s questions, said that the questions raised under articles 15 and 16 would be provided in writing in due course.

46. **Ms. Prada Tejada** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), thanking the Committee for a fruitful dialogue, said that she wished to reiterate her Government's unwavering commitment to protect and promote the rights of women.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.