



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

Distr.: General
17 February 2022

Original: English

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

Summary record of the 1856th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 10 February 2022, at 11 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Acosta Vargas

Contents

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

Eighth periodic report of Senegal

This record is subject to correction. Corrections 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 the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@un.org).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.



The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

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

Eighth periodic report of Senegal (CEDAW/C/SEN/8; CEDAW/C/SEN/Q/8; CEDAW/C/SEN/RQ/8)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Senegal joined the meeting.*
2. **Ms. Diop Dieng** (Senegal), speaking via video link and introducing her country's eighth periodic report (CEDAW/C/SEN/8), said that Senegal had been determined, since acquiring its sovereignty, to establish a State based on the rule of law that was committed to democracy, justice, freedom and respect for human rights. It was also dedicated to the elimination of gender inequalities and to the gradual removal of impediments to progress in women's lives. The elimination of discrimination was a cornerstone of the country's national economic and social development policies.
3. Cross-cutting action plans were designed to enhance social protection, to facilitate access to basic social services and to promote qualitative improvements in social relations in urban and rural areas. The Emergency Community Development Programme aimed to improve the access of rural populations to basic social services such as territorial accessibility, water and electricity services, education, health and household equipment for women. Other action plans included: the Emergency Programme for the Modernization of Border Regions; the Urban Modernization Programme, which was designed to improve services such as sanitation, public lighting and landscaping; the National Family Security Grant Programme, which provided grants to vulnerable families; universal health-care coverage; and the General Delegation for Rapid Entrepreneurship for Women and Youth, which was financed by an annual budget of 30 billion CFA francs (CFAF).
4. The President had responded to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic by launching an Economic and Social Resilience Programme with a budget of CFAF 1,000 billion. Food support was provided to a million deprived households. In addition, support was provided to 10,566 vulnerable women and young people, women suffering from obstetric fistula or chronic illnesses, widows, mine victims, women with disabilities, women in street situations and women prisoners. Grants were provided to 1,000 economic units run by women entrepreneurs in the informal sector. Protection was provided for 5,089 children in the 4 to 17 age group, including reception and accommodation centres for 3,220 children. Protective equipment was distributed and an awareness-raising initiative, entitled "Life-saving masks against COVID-19, women take action", had been launched.
5. The diverse programmes facilitated women's access to education, health, markets and other opportunities, thereby liberating them from prejudices and stereotypes that could undermine their potential and self-esteem. Women and girls became more aware of their responsibilities and their collective and individual rights.
6. A Comprehensive Strategic Health Plan had been adopted for the period 2016–2020. Chemotherapy treatment for female cancer was provided free of charge since 2019. A strategic plan for Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health and a strategic plan for the Reproductive Health of Adolescents and Young People had been adopted. Associations of neighbourhood women leaders known as godmothers (*bajenu gox*) for community mobilization and the development of income-generating activities had been granted formal status. The gender perspective had been taken into account in the National Health and Social Development Plan (2019–2024).
7. The Government had adopted special measures under the Programme for the Improvement of Quality, Equity and Transparency in the Education and Training Sector to encourage girls to enrol in scientific and technological courses. The measures included: scholarship programmes funded by the Economic Community of West African States for girls from disadvantaged families; a "Women in technology" programme to facilitate women's and girls' access to information and communication technologies; the "Miss Maths, Miss Science" competition, which was designed to encourage girls to take a greater interest in science; and the programme to reduce the gender digital divide.

8. Women and girls currently accounted for 54 per cent of students enrolled in vocational training courses. Furthermore, boys were encouraged to enrol in training courses previously reserved for girls, such as hairdressing, dressmaking and catering. As girls and women accounted for only 38 per cent of employees in the technical and industrial sectors, positive discrimination was encouraged to promote their access to those sectors. A National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women had been adopted to promote an inclusive, durable and growth-enhancing entrepreneurship. Women and girls would be encouraged to participate in medium-sized enterprises in order to contribute more actively to the creation of wealth and employment.

9. A project aimed at empowering women in the green industry had been launched in 2020. The access of women and girls to credit had been facilitated by reducing the interest rate to 5 per cent in public financing schemes. There was a programme aimed at encouraging girls to engage in technological innovation in agriculture with a view to promoting careful management of water resources and controlling and monitoring plant health. The Islamic Microfinance Programme, which had been launched in February 2021, aimed to reach a workforce of 1 million women and young people working in rural areas.

10. Senegal had continued implementing the law on parity between men and women in entirely or partially elective bodies from 2019 to 2021 by means of a capacity-building programme on behalf of women. It planned to promote women's access to decision-making bodies and positions of responsibility, for instance in universities, research institutes and diplomatic missions.

11. Article 109 of Act No. 2016-32 of 8 November 2016 required owners of mining concessions and their subcontractors to promote equal employment opportunities for women and men in the occupational sphere and to guarantee equal pay to men and women who were equally qualified.

12. Act No. 2020-05 of 10 January 2020, which criminalized acts of rape and paedophilia, had been translated into the 14 national languages. An electronic platform had been established in the regions of Tambacounda and Kédougou in November 2021 to enable the anonymous reporting of cases of gender-based violence. The Government had adopted the following two bills that would be considered in the National Assembly: a bill authorizing the President to ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183); and a bill supplementing certain provisions of Act No. 97-17 of 1 December 1997 on the Labour Code concerning the protection of pregnant women.

13. The second action plan for 2022–2026 on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security focused on the prevention of violent extremism. A woman had been appointed in 2021 to the post of Contingent Commander in the peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Senior staff in various units of the armed forces had been trained as trainers on matters relating to gender and the promotion of diversity.

14. Additional training and empowerment opportunities had been provided for women and girls through the widespread establishment of departmental centres for assistance and training. A national programme for the creation of agricultural product processing industries had led to the expansion of employment opportunities and wealth generation for women and girls.

15. The President had issued the following orders: speedy implementation of the National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women and submission of the first annual report by the end of the first half of 2022; a mid-term assessment of the National Strategy for Gender Equity and Equality and the National Child Protection Strategy; and expansion of awareness-raising campaigns aimed at combating violence against women and children. Provision had been made in the 2022 budget for the construction of a national holistic care centre (a one-stop centre) for victims of violence.

Articles 1–6

16. **Ms. Ameline** commended the State party on its legislative progress in key areas such as labour, combating of violence, the principle of parity, commitment to the implementation

of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the widespread use of new technology. However, there were persistent discriminatory provisions in, for example, the Family Code, and women and girls still faced challenges in enjoying sexual and reproductive rights.

17. She would be interested in learning more about the mandate of the Legislative Review Committee established in 2016. She was also interested in hearing about possible legislative action in response to the Committee's concluding observations. She wished to know, for instance, whether they would be discussed in the parliament and whether civil society would be involved in their implementation.

18. Article 7 of the Constitution enshrined the principle of equality. However, the Committee would welcome the adoption of a definition of direct and indirect discrimination in line with the Convention that encompassed types of discrimination that had a major impact on women, particularly vulnerable groups or minorities, including sexual minorities.

19. It would be useful to know whether a participatory approach was adopted to the reassessment of plans and the elaboration of reforms. It was essential to entrust civil society with a broad mandate in that regard. She welcomed, for instance, the reassessment of the status of the rights of the child with a view to aligning the legislation with international standards. She wished to know whether the mandate of the Human Rights Committee could be reassessed so that it was compliant with the Paris Principles and could be accredited with A status. As the Convention was rarely invoked in civil and criminal courts, steps should be taken to enhance its visibility. She wished to know how the highly commendable reform of legal aid would be financed and whether it would be available throughout the country, especially in rural areas. She also asked whether judicial centres existed in different parts of the country, especially in the southern region. The Committee would appreciate additional information regarding the State party's youth policy.

20. **Mr. Diouf** (Senegal), speaking via video link, said that the Legislative Review Committee had reviewed most of the country's legislation and regulations concerning discrimination against women. The National Advisory Council on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law received support from all ministerial departments, the parliament and civil society. Widespread consultations had been conducted on the report and the Committee's recommendations. The participatory and inclusive approach encompassed all stakeholders. A bill on the national Human Rights Committee that had been drafted in 2021 was currently being considered by various governmental bodies with a view to ensuring that the Committee acquired A status. The budget for legal aid had increased by 33 per cent, from CFAF 650 million to CFAF 800 million in 2022.

21. **Ms. Astou Diouf** (Senegal), speaking via video link, said that members of parliament were able to contribute to the revision of laws on discrimination against women through various coordination mechanisms, in particular the national committees on discrimination against women, female genital mutilation and gender-based violence. Workshops had also been held to provide information about the laws and to draft proposals. In addition, members of parliament were involved in addressing the issue through the national consultative human rights and international humanitarian law councils, which presented opinions to the Government and carried out education and awareness-raising in rural communities.

22. Legal advice centres existed throughout the country, including in the south, and provided complementary services alongside the government-funded "rights shops" that offered legal and other forms of assistance.

23. **Ms. Diop Dieng** (Senegal) said that the Ministry of Women, Family, Gender and Child Protection was responsible for promoting awareness of women's rights throughout the country. At grassroots level, it was establishing centres to provide empowerment training and legal advice for women and girls in all departments. It also planned to establish centres to provide legal, psychosocial and medical support for women at the district level and shelters for women victims of gender-based violence at the department level.

24. To combat youth unemployment, the Government had launched numerous ambitious programmes, including an emergency programme aimed at placing young persons in sustainable jobs, which had an annual budget of CFA 150 billion. With the support of

partners, it had also launched a programme to promote entrepreneurship among women and young people, with an annual budget of CFA 30 billion.

25. **Ms. Gabr** said that she wished to know how the Government coordinated the work of the many mechanisms and agencies involved in promoting women's rights. She asked which entity was responsible for implementing, evaluating and following up on the National Strategy for Gender Equity and Equality, what was the role of the national machinery for the advancement of women that had been in place since 1975, how financial and human resources were divided up between the various mechanisms and what was being done to prevent duplication of service delivery, including with respect to the international assistance received.

26. **Ms. Astou Diouf** (Senegal) said that the Directorate for Gender Equity and Equality, within the Ministry of Women, Family, Gender and Child Protection, was responsible for overseeing and coordinating the implementation of the National Strategy for Gender Equity and Equality across all sectors, with the involvement of all related ministries and mechanisms. The large number of human rights mechanisms reflected the political will of the Government regarding gender. Gender units had been strategically placed within the general secretariat of each ministry with the aim of promoting gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies. The Government, the parliament, civil society and financial partners were all involved in developing a gender perspective in public policies and following up on their implementation. The National Parity Observatory had a mandate to follow up on the implementation of the national strategy and to report any issues to the highest authorities.

27. The national policy on women's empowerment was a cross-cutting policy; while the Ministry of Women, Family, Gender and Child Protection held primary responsibility for its implementation, all ministries had a role to play in empowering women. All mechanisms and services involved in promoting gender equality were allocated resources to finance the implementation of gender policies. As well as the gender units, each of which had a budget of CFA 10 million, other programmes and projects also contributed to achieving the goals of those policies. In 2021, the Government had ordered the systematic mainstreaming of gender throughout all stages of public policy.

28. **Ms. Diop Dieng** (Senegal) said that the implementation of the various sectoral gender policies was coordinated and assessed by national committees. The highest levels of the Government were also involved in their coordination, as part of their approach of placing women, families and vulnerable groups at the heart of development.

29. **Mr. Safarov** said that he would like to know when the Government planned to amend the Local Government Code and harmonize it with the Electoral Code. He also asked whether any positive discrimination policies, temporary special measures or national legislation had been adopted to ensure de facto and de jure equality, especially regarding employment and the pay gap, and what results had been achieved through the adoption of temporary special measures to support entrepreneurship among women.

30. **Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen** said that she wished to know what the National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women entailed and what progress had been achieved thus far. In addition, she wondered what was being done to encourage the reporting of sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace. She asked whether the Government intended to amend the Labour Code to remove the provisions restricting the kinds of jobs which women could perform. With regard to the planned revision of the social security system, she wondered when the proposed changes would take effect and how they would benefit women.

31. **Ms. Tisheva** said that, given the continued prevalence of female genital mutilation and child marriage in the State party, she wished to know what was being done to change attitudes towards those practices among all sectors of society, including among religious and traditional leaders, teachers, health and social care providers and the media. As the vast majority of the population reportedly opposed female genital mutilation, she asked whether the Government intended to further engage men in efforts to stop the practice and, if so, how. She would like to know what was being done at the executive and legislative levels to end the practice, develop a reliable information and communication system for use by the various national and local authorities, increase the resources allocated to such activities and ensure

transparency in the use of funds. She also wondered whether the Government planned to amend the law to increase the penalties for female genital mutilation, take account of cross-border crimes involving the practice and provide for emergency protection orders to prevent the crime.

32. With regard to other forms of violence against women, she asked whether the Government intended to conduct a review of the existing legislation and adopt a law that would prohibit all forms of violence against women and girls and provide for emergency protection orders and interdisciplinary services for victims.

33. **Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen** said that she wished to know what steps the police took to identify victims of trafficking among the large population of unregistered sex workers. She also wondered what was being done to combat the harassment of sex workers by the police. It would be useful to know how long the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons had been in force and what progress had been made thus far.

34. As forced begging was the most prevalent form of trafficking in Senegal, she asked whether any specific laws had been adopted to criminalize the practice and why individuals found to have trafficked children for the purposes of begging had not been prosecuted, despite the legal system having sufficient capacity to do so. She wondered what measures were in place to protect child victims of forced begging.

35. Given that many Senegalese citizens were victims of international trafficking, she asked how the Government regulated the recruitment of nationals seeking employment outside the country and what was being done to protect victims and educate workers about their labour rights.

36. **Ms. Astou Diouf** (Senegal) said that the practice of female genital mutilation had been criminalized in Senegal for several decades. The Government's strategy to eradicate female genital mutilation and third plan of action for its implementation had produced results: between January 2020 and January 2021, nine cases had been reported, a considerable increase over preceding years, which reflected the efficacy of the awareness-raising work that had been conducted. In all nine cases, the perpetrators had been duly punished. With the support of civil society, the Government ran annual week-long campaigns within communities to encourage individuals to cease the practice, and it provided follow-up awareness-raising and support campaigns within communities. The strategy recognized the central role of young people in combating the practice, and the importance of involving men and boys in the efforts.

37. **Ms. Guisse** (Senegal), speaking via video link, said that sex workers were considered to be full citizens who were free to exercise their profession within the confines of the law. When a sex worker filed a complaint of police harassment, that complaint was thoroughly investigated, irrespective of whether the sex worker was registered or not. The victim and the alleged perpetrator were questioned and, if the complaint was substantiated, the perpetrator was tried in a court of law.

38. **Mr. Diouf** (Senegal) said that a national anti-trafficking unit had been established within the Ministry of Justice. In cooperation with the National Advisory Council on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, the unit conducted training and awareness-raising campaigns on trafficking for justice officials. A database on trafficking had been set up but it was not yet functioning very effectively. In the majority of cases, investigations into reports of trafficking resulted in prosecutions being brought for the offence of procurement.

39. **Mr. Ndiaye** (Senegal), speaking via video link, said that a solid legal framework for the protection of children had been established in Senegal. Under national law, children were protected against violence and exploitation, including forced begging. In every department in the country, specialized committees made up of representatives of government departments, civil society organizations and religious authorities provided protection and care for all children living in street situations.

40. The Government was seeking to garner the support of religious organizations in its efforts to assist children in street situations. Under the "No Children in the Streets" programme, over 5,500 children had been taken off the streets and, in the majority of cases, placed with a family. The Government intended to develop a national programme for

rescuing children from street situations and reintegrating them into society. Furthermore, a well-funded programme had been established to modernize the *daaras* (religious schools) and ensure that they respected the rights of children in their care. All the various programmes established to assist children would be supported by a strengthened legislative and regulatory framework. In that connection, the Government had developed a bill on the status of *daaras* that would grant a specific legal status to those institutions and ensure that they upheld the principle of the best interests of the child.

41. **Ms. Diop Dieng** (Senegal) said that strategies and programmes had been developed to eradicate harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage, which were considered to constitute forms of discrimination. Programmes aimed at eradicating female genital mutilation had been developed for Muslim and Christian communities. Furthermore, a law criminalizing rape and paedophilia had been adopted and translated into 14 national languages and a strategy on promoting positive masculinity was being implemented.

42. **Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen**, noting that sex workers might be reluctant to accuse police officers of sexual harassment when they depended on the police for protection, said that she wished to know how many police officers had been prosecuted for sexually harassing a sex worker and how many of them had been convicted. She asked what was being done to improve the database on trafficking in persons, which, when working properly, would be an essential tool in combating that offence. Given that children subjected to forced begging were effectively victims of trafficking, she wondered why no prosecutions for trafficking had resulted from the campaign to remove several thousand children from the streets.

43. **Ms. Tisheva** said that she wished to know whether the Government would consider adopting a comprehensive law prohibiting all forms of violence against women, including harmful traditional practices and acts of violence directed at women and girls in public spaces. She wondered whether the Government would consider strengthening the implementation of the law prohibiting female genital mutilation and introducing harsher penalties for persons engaging in that practice. It would be interesting to learn whether civil law would be amended to provide for the issuance of urgent protection orders in situations where a woman or girl faced a risk of female genital mutilation.

44. **Ms. Diop Dieng** (Senegal) said that women and girls were protected from gender-based violence by the law criminalizing rape and the sexual abuse of minors.

Articles 7–9

45. **Ms. Stott Despoja**, noting that presidential and federal elections were due to be held in mid-2022, said that she would welcome updated statistics on women's participation in politics at the local and provincial levels. She wondered what action would be taken to increase the number of women ministers and whether the Government was taking any holistic or bottom-up measures to foster support for women's participation in politics, including among male politicians.

46. It would be interesting to learn whether there was a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the Gender Parity Act and whether the Act had led to an increase in the diversity of women in politics. The Committee would welcome updated statistics on the number of women working in the public sector, including in the area of territorial administration. It would also be grateful to hear about any measures being taken to increase the number of women judges and ambassadors. The delegation might indicate whether the effectiveness of the training programme for women parliamentarians was being monitored and whether any statistics on its outcomes were available.

47. **Mr. Sy** (Senegal) said that the number of women appointed to positions in the consular and diplomatic corps had increased significantly. A number of ambassadorial posts were occupied by women and a woman had recently been appointed Deputy Permanent Representative at the Permanent Mission of Senegal to the United Nations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was currently making efforts to increase the number of women who held diplomatic and consular posts.

48. **Ms. Diop Dieng** (Senegal) said that the number of women occupying government positions was still relatively low but had risen recently. A number of important government departments were currently headed by women, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy and the Ministry of the Civil Service.

49. **Ms. Astou Diouf** (Senegal) said that women accounted for over 43 per cent of parliamentarians and currently headed both the High Council for Territorial Units and the Economic, Social and Environmental Council. Gender parity among the staff of both institutions had been achieved. The reports published every year by the National Parity Observatory contained information on the degree of implementation of the Gender Parity Act. Although many women were active in political parties, further action was required to increase the number of women heads of parties. Women candidates faced no discrimination in elections as their rights were protected by the electoral rules in force. Although the Government did not hold statistics on the number of women occupying decision-making positions, that number had increased in all sectors.

50. **Mr. Seck** (Senegal), speaking via video link, said that there were currently 13 women ambassadors, which, given that women had formerly been barred from joining the diplomatic corps, was an impressive figure. Aside from the fact that the Minister for Foreign Affairs was a woman, women headed two very important bodies within the Ministry, namely, the Directorate of General Administration and Facilities and the Directorate of State Protocol.

51. **Ms. Diop Dieng** (Senegal) said that, in line with the electoral rules in force, gender parity had been achieved for all the lists of candidates in the recent local elections. Efforts were now being made to ensure gender parity in elections for positions in local government offices. According to a report issued in 2018 by the United Nations Development Programme, the proportion of elected representatives who were women was higher in Senegal than in any other African country. Women were also well represented in the law enforcement agencies and the judiciary.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.