



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Forty-fifth session

Summary record of the 912th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 22 January 2010, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Pimentel (Vice-Chairperson)

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In the absence of Ms. Gabr, Ms. Pimentel, Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

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

Sixth periodic report of Malawi (continued)
(CEDAW/C/MWI/6 and CEDAW/C/MWI/Q/6 and Add.1)

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

Articles 7 to 9 (continued)

2. **Ms. Murillo de la Vega** said that she would like to know whether the 2008 study on the political participation of women, conducted by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Community Development, had yielded any conclusions and whether any measures had been taken on the basis of the data obtained.

3. **Mr. Nyirongo** (Malawi) said that the study had been conducted under the auspices of the Canadian International Development Agency's Gender Equality Support Programme. Its main findings were not yet available.

Articles 10 to 14

4. **Ms. Bailey**, recalling that the Committee had previously raised a number of concerns about Malawi's compliance with article 10 of the Convention, said that most of the initiatives described by the State party in response to those concerns, especially in the area of primary education, were not targeted at removing the specific obstacles that hindered the enrolment and retention of girls. The Committee would welcome further information on measures taken to address the problems of early and forced marriage; child labour, especially in relation to girls engaged in housework and caregiving; and sexual harassment in schools, for which there should be zero tolerance, especially where teachers were responsible. According to Malawi's sixth periodic report (CEDAW/C/MWI/6), the Ministry of Education was aware that cases of sexual harassment in educational institutions were on the increase; it was therefore difficult to understand why no official statistics had been produced, since any tolerance of such incidents fostered a climate of impunity. While

the Committee welcomed the Ministry's recognition that a comprehensive policy, together with legislation and severe punitive measures, was needed to curb sexual harassment in schools, communities and households, it wished to stress the urgency of enacting appropriate legislation. The State party should clarify whether such initiatives and policies were already under way and what time frame was envisaged for implementing them.

5. More information was also needed on the guidelines being developed to ensure recruitment on an equal basis in public education institutions, including the time frame for their implementation, particularly since the presence of more female teachers could also help curtail sexual harassment in schools. Lastly, the time frame for implementing and monitoring programmes and policies to prevent the early drop-out of girls from primary school should be indicated, since that would enlarge the pool of female students qualified to benefit from secondary and tertiary education. The Government's current 50-50 selection policy for secondary school students was not effective because of the attrition at the primary level.

6. **Ms. Zou Xiaogiao** said that she would like to know whether the initiatives adopted in response to the challenges faced by women and girls in the area of education had yielded any positive results. Were there any statistics, for example, that pointed to higher enrolment figures or lower drop-out rates as a result of the measures taken? It would also be interesting to know whether any educational campaigns had been conducted to prevent sexual harassment and inform teachers that it was a crime. Lastly, information on any work done to establish a comprehensive programme of vocational education for rural women and girls, as recommended by the Committee in its concluding comments to Malawi's previous report, should be provided.

7. **Ms. Patten** said that it was regrettable that very little information had been provided on implementation of article 11 of the Convention. It would be useful to have a clearer picture of the position of women in the labour market and any steps taken by the Government to address existing discrimination. She requested additional information on specific measures to address cases of employment discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy. Bearing in mind that no law had yet been enacted to combat sexual harassment in the workplace, she would be interested to know what priority the

Government was giving to that issue, as well as to the adoption of the Gender Equality Statute, and whether, in the meantime, it had developed any workplace policies against gender discrimination in the labour market.

8. Lastly, she would welcome additional information on the large number of women who worked in the informal sector. It would be useful to know how the Government was addressing the legal and social protection of such women and whether it was taking measures to strengthen and promote women's microenterprise and entrepreneurship. More details about women entrepreneurs' access to credit and business services, trade information and technology would also be useful.

9. **Mr. Bruun** said that although the Committee, in its concluding comments on Malawi's previous report, had stressed the importance of detailed information and data about the situation of women in the field of employment, very little statistical information had been included in the sixth periodic report. He would therefore like to know whether any steps had been taken to improve the collection of labour market information. With regard to child labour, he asked what was being done to make employers, such as tobacco farms, responsible for the education of the girls they employed.

10. **Ms. Coker-Appiah** said that she would appreciate further details on how Malawi had been able to achieve a coverage rate of 93 per cent for antenatal care, bearing in mind the problems of poverty and accessibility that limited women's access to health-care services.

11. Noting that traditional birth attendants provided services to 2 per cent of pregnant women, she expressed concern that their role had been redefined to exclude conducting any deliveries, particularly in view of the challenges that still existed in difficult-to-reach areas. Evidence from other African countries facing similar challenges indicated that traditional birth attendants could serve as a key resource to fill the gap in health-care delivery if they were trained to perform deliveries in a hygienic and efficient manner and to recognize complications for early referral to medical facilities. She therefore urged Malawi to reconsider its decision and to train traditional birth attendants to perform necessary services to vulnerable women, particularly in rural areas.

12. While the Committee understood the serious impact of the country's high HIV/AIDS prevalence rate, as described at the previous meeting, it was concerned about the implications of some of the issues raised for women's human rights. On the issue of compulsory testing, she would like to know whether women were given access to free treatment if they were found to be HIV-positive, and whether pregnant women with HIV/AIDS were entitled to free antiretroviral treatment to prevent mother-to-child transmission. Furthermore, it was regrettable that the report had not described how Malawi was addressing certain traditional practices which increased women's vulnerability to HIV infection. More information should be provided in that respect, particularly since research from other countries indicated that relying on the "ABC" strategy (abstinence, be faithful, condom use), without taking into account underlying cultural factors, had proven ineffective in achieving the expected reduction in the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate.

13. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** said that, although the report announced many health-care programmes, strategies and actions to improve the quality of women's lives, no information had been provided on their effectiveness. The Committee would therefore like to know how the programmes were monitored in order to evaluate progress made. How the efforts of the various public and private agencies that provided health-care services to women were coordinated should also be clarified, in order to ensure that the standards and objectives of health policies were met. In particular, the Committee would appreciate further information on the real extent of health-care coverage in rural areas.

14. Prevention was essential to address such issues as high fertility rates, pregnancies at an early age, unsafe abortions and rising HIV infection rates. She would therefore welcome additional information on the family planning system in Malawi. It would also be helpful to learn whether sex education was provided in schools and whether men and adolescent boys were included in family planning and sex education programmes. The current contraceptive prevalence rate in rural and urban areas, and the accessibility of contraceptive methods in rural areas, should be clarified.

15. **Ms. Rasekh** asked what services were available for women victims of domestic violence and violence in general. In particular, she would like to know whether the public sector and non-governmental

organizations offered any psychosocial counselling programmes for women. Noting that the report did not provide any information on women's general health in Malawi, she requested statistical data on access to health-care services by women with such diseases as cancer, especially breast cancer, and diabetes, as well as by women with disabilities. She also asked for clarification of the status of the new provisions on health, especially sexual and reproductive health, that had been proposed by the Gender Commission on the development of the Gender Equality Statute.

16. **Ms. Šimonović**, while she acknowledged the measures that Malawi had taken to address its high maternal mortality rate, said that the issue was closely linked to that of unsafe abortions. She asked whether Malawi would consider changing its legislation, which currently criminalized abortion. If women who wished to terminate their pregnancies were able to go to hospital and seek medical assistance, lives would be saved.

17. **The Chairperson**, speaking in her capacity as an expert, noted that many Malawian women were unable to insist on condom use, for reasons of illiteracy, lack of information, and unequal power relations with men. She asked for recent data on any measures to expand women's education about different contraceptive methods. Additional information on the linkages between maternal mortality and unsafe abortions would also be appreciated.

18. **Ms. Awori** asked for more information on the Microfinance Bill and the proposals it contained. It would also be useful to know what other measures existed to streamline and strengthen the microfinance sector, which provided many women with a way out of poverty. In particular, the Committee would appreciate more information on how the Malawi Rural Development Fund worked, what impact it had on rural women, and how many women had benefited from it. Lastly, it would be interesting to know how many women were able to access formal credit and what the Government was doing to increase that number.

19. **Ms. Zou Xiaojiao** said that very little information on the rights of women to obtain benefits and to participate in recreational activities had been provided, and she hoped that more information would be provided in the next report. She also wondered whether specific conditions existed for gaining access to credit and whether the particular difficulties faced

by women in obtaining loans represented a form of indirect discrimination. Had the Government conducted any research in that regard? Lastly, she would appreciate further clarification on how microcredit schemes were being implemented.

20. **Ms. Murillo de la Vega** asked for an explanation of the system of land ownership or management, particularly with regard to the role occupied by women. It was her understanding that, while women worked extremely hard to produce food and maintain their families, their representation in local forums was limited. Details of the Malawi Rural Development Fund budget for rural women should also be provided.

21. Noting that matrimonial practices in rural areas were very traditional, often involving early arranged marriages and domestic violence, she would like to know whether the Government was seeking to change attitudes by obtaining convictions in a court of law rather than simply working with the perpetrators to change their behaviour. Lastly, she would appreciate hearing the delegation's opinion as to the influence of Christian religious tradition on contraceptive use and HIV prevention efforts.

22. **Ms. Ara Begum** asked whether Malawi had established an integrated and sustainable rural development plan that included rural women in decision-making processes, in order to ensure that they had full access to justice, education, health services, credit facilities and land ownership. She would also like to know whether women formed part of the local administration in rural areas and whether the Government provided any financial benefits for the many rural women, including older women, who were engaged in caregiving for family members and were therefore unable to work outside the home. Furthermore, she wondered what protection was available to rural women, particularly widows, who faced allegations of witchcraft. How was prompt action taken to avoid mob trials, especially in remote villages, and did such women have access to shelters?

23. She would like to know whether the policy on the elderly being developed by the Ministry of Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly would cover such issues as the health and employment of elderly women, their protection from violence and elder abuse, and the availability of shelters. Lastly, in view of the increase in rural-to-urban migration, it would be helpful to learn

whether the Government had a policy to ensure safe migration and combat trafficking.

24. **Ms. Chikankheni** (Malawi) said that the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises section of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Private Sector Development oversaw the provision of credit to small and medium enterprises through microfinance institutions. Although that sector had undergone significant growth, women still had problems in accessing credit, because of the need for collateral and the higher interest rates charged by microfinance institutions relative to other banking institutions. The Ministry of Finance had therefore established a department to regulate microfinance institutions and ensure that the interest rates they charged were not significantly higher than those available in the commercial banking system, which was expected to improve access to microfinance. To address the collateral problem, the Government was encouraging group-based microfinance, where peer pressure helped to ensure that loans were repaid.

25. Malawi had taken note of the Committee's comments about the lack of statistical information in its current report, and would provide more detailed statistics in its next report. In particular, the recently developed Malawi gender and development index would provide statistical data on the status of gender equality, allowing progress to be monitored.

26. Turning to the question about the Malawi Rural Development Fund, she explained that the Fund, launched in 2005, was a popular microcredit channel which provided more funding to women than men, owing to its use of group-based microfinance. As a Government-run fund, it did not charge high interest rates or demand collateral but relied solely on the group-based approach. The Government, through the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Private Sector Development and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Community Development, was also promoting the "village banking" model as a means of encouraging people to save. The system had developed quickly and was now present throughout the country.

27. Turning to the issue of women's entitlement to financial benefits, she said that the Government had established a social protection scheme, consisting of direct cash transfers or in-kind transfers; in some cases benefits were provided in exchange for work, while elderly women, who were less productive, and other ultra poor labour constrained households, received

social cash transfers. Almost 10 per cent of the ultra poor in Malawi benefited from such transfers, and although they were not yet available throughout the country, the pilot scheme currently covered a third of all districts. A draft policy on social protection was also to be considered by the Cabinet.

28. **Mr. Chidengu-Gama** (Malawi) said that, in addition to the social protection scheme, vulnerable women and households also benefited from subsidized farm inputs to improve food security.

29. Various programmes, including social mobilization campaigns, had been developed to address the problem of girls dropping out of school owing to early and forced marriages. Initiatives that sought to involve mothers in their children's education, such as the "mother groups" launched in 1994, had also been introduced throughout the country, with the support of a number of stakeholders. Various civil society organizations, with the Government's involvement, were conducting awareness-raising campaigns on the importance of girls' education and special scholarships were available to help female students complete secondary education.

30. Programmes run by non-governmental organizations were addressing the problem of sexual harassment in schools by empowering girls to speak openly about gender-based violence. Teachers also had a code of conduct to address that issue. When a case of gender-based violence was reported, both the perpetrator and the victim were counselled if both were students; however, where the perpetrator was a teacher, he or she would in most cases be suspended pending an investigation. The Government had developed a teacher recruitment and employment policy that sought to increase the number of female teachers in rural areas to 50 per cent. It was also working to expand the capacity of teacher training colleges, with the support of its partners, since that was currently a limiting factor.

31. One of Malawi's partners had conducted a study, in 2004, on the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace; its findings had been circulated to human resource managers in the public and private sector. Companies were being encouraged to develop workplace policies against sexual harassment, while the question of unionizing workers was also high on the agenda as a means of addressing that and other issues.

32. A number of initiatives existed to assist women victims of violence, including the provision of psychosocial support and counselling services. Rape management guidelines had been developed and victims were provided with post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) within 72 hours, in order to help prevent HIV infection.

33. Regarding the participation of rural women in local government structures, a number of seats were allocated to special interest groups, including vulnerable women and women with disabilities, so that they could advocate for their needs at the local level. Lastly, on the issue of microcredit, the Ministry of Finance was developing an inclusive finance policy through the Financial Inclusion in Malawi (FIMA) project, which aimed to increase access to financial services by low-income population groups, including vulnerable women, youth and people with disabilities.

34. **Mr. Katengeza** (Malawi) said that the Government was very concerned about the country's high maternal mortality rate, which had risen from 620 per 100,000 live births in 1992 to 1120 in 2000, before improving slightly to 984 in 2004 and 807 in 2006. Unsafe abortions, which usually occurred in a setting where health services were not available, were a major contributing factor to high maternal mortality. Guidelines had been drawn up to ensure that post-abortion care was provided to all women hospitalized with complications following an abortion. Owing to the country's restrictive abortion laws, however, women could not request an abortion in a public health institution. The Government was seeking to address that issue. A strategic assessment of unsafe abortions had already been carried out through the Reproductive Health Unit at the Ministry of Health and the next step was to conduct a clinic/hospital-based study to assess the scale of the problem. Data analysis for that study was under way and the results should be out by March 2010.

35. The distance between public health facilities was generally more than 20 kilometres, although in some cases private hospitals run by the Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM) were accessible more easily than the public facilities. In order to address the problem of high maternal mortality, the Ministry of Health had entered into an agreement with CHAM whereby the Government paid for treatment that women could not otherwise afford. Although 93 per cent of women already received antenatal care, the

Government was now advocating a more focused approach, which encouraged women to attend four targeted antenatal care visits during their pregnancy, including one at the end of the first trimester.

36. Some traditional birth attendants were still conducting deliveries. However, in the light of a Ministry of Health assessment showing that most maternal deaths occurred in such circumstances, it had been decided to redefine the role of traditional birth attendants and encourage them to refer pregnant women to a health facility rather than conducting the delivery themselves. Making the change was proving somewhat challenging, however, since those attendants charged their clients for the service provided and therefore had to find an alternative way of sustaining their income. Another approach aimed at reducing maternal mortality, already yielding positive results, was to provide basic emergency obstetric care training for health workers at small health centres, so that they could deal with cases normally treated at a larger hospital.

37. Guidelines developed by the Ministry of Health for the management of victims of sexual assault and rape had been made available at both police victim support units and hospitals to ensure that assistance could be accessed from either facility. Health workers had also been trained to deal with such cases and take specimens where necessary.

38. On the subject of access to health services for cancer treatment, Malawi had developed a cervical cancer programme and was working to raise awareness of the need for screening.

39. In the area of family planning, the contraceptive prevalence rate currently stood at 41 per cent (38 per cent modern methods and 3 per cent traditional methods). The Government aimed to further increase contraceptive use by developing a community-oriented approach to family planning, based on that observed in Madagascar. In that connection, people living in rural villages were being trained as health surveillance assistants to provide contraception, and administer injectable contraceptives, to members of their community.

40. **Mr. Nyirongo** (Malawi), in response to the question about financial support for women caring for HIV/AIDS patients, said that such support would be provided under the proposed HIV/AIDS law. Employed persons would be given eight weeks' paid leave and

four weeks on half pay, followed by unpaid leave, for the purposes of caring for children under the age of 14.

41. With regard to the role of women in land management, the Government proposed to move away from the current land tenure regimes and introduce a system of title holding under which all Malawians would hold land and would be free to acquire or dispose of it as they wished. The Government believed that such a system would also increase access to loans, as the land could be used as collateral.

42. Although a review of the country's abortion legislation had been on the drawing board for 12 years, it had been not been included as part of the review of the Penal Code. In view of all the various traditional, cultural, religious and political interests involved, it had been felt that a specific programme should instead be developed to examine the issue. The National Gender Equality Commission had similarly concluded that the issue warranted separate attention and could not simply be dealt with under the Gender Equality Bill. The legal regime did not completely prohibit abortion under all circumstances. Although the performance of abortions was illegal under sections 149-151 of the Penal Code, section 243 of the same Code provided that a pregnancy could be terminated if the mother's life was in danger.

43. With regard to traditional practices, the question of whether they should be prohibited or merely regulated had been a matter for debate. Certain cultural or religious practices would be prohibited under the proposed HIV/AIDS law and Gender Equality Statute.

Articles 15 and 16

44. **Mr. Flinterman**, noting that access to the courts was still limited owing to the cost of the legal process, asked whether that had a disproportionately negative impact on women. If so, he would like to know how the Government was planning to help women claim their rights. He would also appreciate more information on the proposed introduction of legal aid. Secondly, he asked for an explanation of measures being taken to help women fully enjoy their right to freedom of movement, which, according to the report, was still restricted by control measures introduced by male counterparts.

45. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that the report candidly described many regrettable practices and hindrances to women's rights in the area of marriage

and family law. Firstly, she would like to know why the law criminalizing inheritance dispossession had not yet been enforced and why no prosecutors had been appointed to date. In addition, it would be useful to learn whether the land reform process sought to address the differences between patrilineal and matrilineal systems, as well as the three categories of public, private and customary land, since both aspects of the current land tenure system were detrimental to women's rights in the area of inheritance. She sought clarification on the current custody laws, as applicable to all systems of marriage including customary marriage, bearing in mind that, while the Constitution guaranteed equal rights to acquire and retain custody, guardianship and care of children, other sources suggested that women in patrilineal societies traditionally lost custody of their children upon divorce. Noting that the Constitution also granted women the right to fair maintenance on the dissolution of marriage, she asked the delegation to describe the situation in practice, under all systems of marriage.

46. With regard to property rights, other sources indicated that the clause in the Constitution stating that women were entitled, upon divorce, to a fair disposition of property that was held jointly with a husband, had been interpreted by the High Court as making the distribution of property contingent on formal title. The presumption was that an inference of joint ownership of property was not to be made from a mere fact of marriage and that women were therefore not entitled to a share of property if they did not formally own it, even in cases where they had made a non-financial contribution to the household, through the maintenance of property items, housekeeping and childcare. Expressing concern that the Law Commission had not viewed that interpretation as problematic and that the new Family Code did not propose any change in the arrangement, she requested additional information on the matter.

47. The delegation should explain whether married women were still unable to migrate except under the custody of a husband, as described in the previous report, and should also elaborate on the information provided in paragraph 287 of the report, regarding traditional healers who prescribed sexual intercourse with minors.

48. **Mr. Nyirongo** (Malawi) said that the proposed new Family Code aimed to create a unified system of marriage, in accordance with constitutional standards.

Issues of custody, and all other consequences of marriage, would be governed by that system. Under it, the interests of the parties to the marriage would be paramount and the different traditional or religious formalities for entry into marriage would only determine the validity of that marriage and not confer rights and obligations on the parties.

49. With regard to property ownership, the Constitution was merely emphasizing that in cases where a husband and wife held property under joint ownership, that property would be fairly distributed upon dissolution of their marriage; it did not mean there were no other ways in which property would be distributed. Turning to the issue of land dispossession under the patrilineal or matrilineal system, it was important to clarify that, while, in a patrilineal society, women were dispossessed of land in the event of divorce or a spouse's death, men were in a similar position in a matrilineal society. By seeking to introduce a new system of law, the Government wanted to ensure that each person received the title to a piece of land, which he or she could then lease or dispose of in any manner.

50. **Ms. Kachale** (Malawi) said that the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions had only just learned that some traditional healers were prescribing sexual intercourse with minors, so no comprehensive studies had been carried out. The Office considered that, as well as prosecuting the perpetrator, a short-term remedy for the problem might be to charge the traditional healer with procuring, or aiding and abetting the crime. No statistics were available on cases where traditional healers had been charged with such offences. Concerning property dispossession, some prosecutions had been brought, although no statistics could currently be provided.

51. On the issue of legal aid, there was room for improvement since many women were still unable to benefit from such resources. Nonetheless, considerable progress had been made, with the support of the European Union. Funding to the Legal Aid Department had substantially increased, and a recent campaign had sought to raise awareness of women's rights in the area of access to justice. There had initially been two legal aid offices in different cities, a third office had been opened in another region three years ago, and the Strategic Plan for 2009-2014 drawn up by the Minister of Justice envisaged opening such offices, as well as offices of the Administrator General's Department,

which administered intestate property, in 25 districts. The strategy was also to increase the recruitment of legal aid lawyers, since high staff turnover, owing to frequent dissatisfaction with salary levels, had recently led to a reduction in their number. Eight such lawyers currently worked in the south of the country, nine in the central region and three in the north.

52. With regard to the interpretation of women's property rights under the Constitution, the situation was challenging since some High Court judges had ruled that, in order to be able to claim a share in a property that was not in her or his name, a person must prove that he or she had made a financial contribution to the property, whereas another judge had ruled that the contribution did not need to be financial. The latter ruling had been reversed by an Act of Parliament, which could explain the current confusion among High Court judges over how to interpret the provisions of the Constitution. The Government might consider reviewing that decision in the future.

53. **Ms. Awori** requested more specific information on the wording of the Act of Parliament that had reversed that High Court decision. She asked whether the Malawi Rural Development Fund covered the whole country and, if not, how many women, or which regions, had benefited from it to date. She would like to hear more about measures being taken to enhance the Fund's operation.

54. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that she had not yet received a response to her questions about maintenance, child custody and women's right to migrate.

55. **Ms. Ara Begum** said that she disagreed with the comment that older women were less productive, which reflected a stereotyped attitude. Older women in Malawi often cared for children and HIV/AIDS patients, providing a vital and very productive service within society.

56. **Ms. Rasekh** said that she had not yet received a response to her question on the provision of psychosocial services for victims of domestic violence suffering from depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and other trauma-related issues. Specifically, it would be helpful to know what services were provided by the Government.

57. **Ms. Chikankheni** (Malawi) said that she accepted the point made about the productive services

provided by older women, although the women who benefited from social cash transfers were, in fact, very elderly. The Malawi Rural Development Fund was a well-institutionalized organization providing microfinance across the entire country, although its limited budgetary resources represented a challenge.

58. **Mr. Nyirongo** (Malawi) said that the unified system of marriage would govern maintenance and custody issues under the new code. Upon dissolution of a marriage, the Court's decision on maintenance would depend on the outcome of the divorce and both parties' earnings, with either party being entitled to maintenance, depending on the earnings of each. Maintenance would also be extended to single pregnant women. In the case of custody, the interests of the parties concerned would be paramount and the Court would also take into account the child's best interests, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

59. The right to freedom of movement was guaranteed by the Constitution and would also be protected under the Gender Equality Statute. The issue of migration, meanwhile, was a programmatic area where the Ministry would be looking to educate the parties so that they were aware of women's rights in marriage, as well as the limitations that could be imposed in the marital setting.

60. **Mr. Katengeza** (Malawi), responding to the question about psychosocial services for women victims of violence, reiterated that guidelines had been established for dealing with victims of sexual assault and rape in the hospital setting. Nurses and clinicians trained to provide the necessary services, including psychiatric services, were present in most hospitals. As well as post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), victims were offered HIV testing and were referred for ongoing psychosocial counselling.

61. **Ms. Kachale** (Malawi) said that she was unable to provide the exact name of the Act of Parliament that had reversed the High Court decision to take into account non-financial contributions when determining rights to property; she would send the Committee all relevant details following the conclusion of the meeting.

62. **Ms. Chikankheni** (Malawi) thanked the Committee for the opportunity to present Malawi's report. The delegation had learned many lessons and had gained a clearer picture of the world's priorities in

terms of addressing gender inequalities, empowering women and restoring dignity to women and girls. Malawi would not fail to meet those global aspirations.

63. **The Chairperson** thanked the delegation for its constructive dialogue with the Committee and commended Malawi for its efforts to overcome the political, financial and economic difficulties it faced.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.