



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Summary record of the 1945th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 9 February 2023, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Peláez Narváez

Contents

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

Tenth periodic report of Norway

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

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

Tenth periodic report of Norway ([CEDAW/C/NOR/10](#); [CEDAW/C/NOR/QPR/10](#); [CEDAW/C/NOR/QPR/10/Corr.1](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Norway joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair**, welcoming the delegation of Norway to the meeting, explained that additional members of the delegation would be participating via video link.
3. **Ms. Trettebergstuen** (Norway), introducing her country's tenth periodic report ([CEDAW/C/NOR/10](#)), said that her Government was firmly committed to achieving gender equality and that the Convention was an important tool in its efforts to do so. Since taking power in October 2021, the Government had begun work on implementing a proactive and cross-cutting gender equality policy, under the coordination of the Ministry of Culture and Equality. It had increased the grant scheme for family and equality policy measures by 70 per cent in 2022 and had strengthened the funding of the country's four Regional Centres for Equality and Diversity. The Government was also reviewing the effectiveness of the system that had been set up to enforce the prohibition of different types of discrimination under the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act. The Directorate of Children, Youth and Family Affairs had regularly reported to the Government on gender equality and discrimination issues during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.
4. Since 2020, all public and private employers of a certain size had been obliged to monitor and report on pay differences between women and men and the use of non-voluntary part-time employment. The Directorate had commissioned research to identify the extent to which that duty was being fulfilled. The Government had also sent out for public consultation a proposal to establish a certification scheme for gender equality and diversity for private companies. Following an amendment to the Working Environment Act, new regulations had been introduced to strengthen the right of everyone to full-time work, while the Government had also allocated funding for pilot projects designed to increase the availability of full-time employment. A public committee had recently submitted a proposal to the Government concerning the introduction of gender quotas in education. In turn, the Government had submitted for public consultation a proposal that gender representation rules should be expanded to apply to the boards of all large private companies. In 2020, 74 per cent of the participants in *Jobbsjansen* – a job opportunity programme aimed at providing immigrant women with basic qualifications and skills – had found work or had enrolled in education after completing the programme.
5. Since taking power, the Government had appointed several expert committees to review legislation and make recommendations on issues related to implementation of the Convention. Those issues included negative social control and honour-based violence, regulation of the financial relationship of couples in cohabitation, and abortion and the counselling offered to women who chose to end their pregnancy. A committee had also been tasked with producing a report on women's health and health from a gender perspective; the Government intended to use the report's findings to devise a new strategy on women's health.
6. Climate change had a disproportionate impact on women and girls, especially those in vulnerable and marginalized situations and conflict settings. The Government had therefore taken steps to improve its understanding of the relationship between gender and climate change and to assess how it could incorporate a gender perspective into climate policies. In that regard, at the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Norway had made a joint commitment with its Nordic neighbours to ensuring that their respective national climate policies were fair and inclusive.
7. In 2023, the Government would launch the country's fifth national action plan for women, peace and security, as well as a new action plan for incorporating women's rights and gender equality considerations in all decisions on foreign policy and development policy. A committee had also been set up to study the gender equality challenges faced by boys and men and the extent to which they were perpetuated by stereotypes concerning masculinity

and traditional gender roles. The Government was working on a white paper on sexual harassment and had already submitted for public consultation a proposal to ratify the International Labour Organization Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).

8. Multilateral cooperation had an important role to play in her country's efforts to achieve gender equality. Norway had joined the action coalitions of the Generation Equality Forum on feminist action for climate justice, and on bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights. It was also proud to be co-chair of the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action.

9. **A representative of Norway** said that, in March 2021, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security had tasked the Criminal Law Commission with conducting a general review of the provisions on sexual offences in the Penal Code. The Commission had concluded that the current provisions on rape should be replaced by a new legal definition that placed the lack of free consent at its centre, as had been recommended by the Committee in 2017. A public consultation on the Commission's report had been initiated and was scheduled to run until April 2023.

10. In recent years, considerable efforts had been made to improve prison conditions for women, including by systematically separating female and male inmates and providing tailored mental health-care services for women. In 2019, a new women's wing capable of holding 10 high-security and 20 low-security prisoners had been opened at Agder prison. A working group formed by the Norwegian Correctional Service Directorate would soon issue a series of recommendations concerning the construction of new facilities, the rehabilitation of existing sites and the repurposing of facilities currently used for male prisoners. Furthermore, a national resource team had been placed at Bredtveit prison with the aims of providing specialized mental health-care services for women deprived of their liberty and preventing the use of long-term isolation for inmates with significant mental health issues.

11. In its concluding observations on the ninth periodic report of Norway ([CEDAW/C/NOR/CO/9](#)) in 2017, the Committee had called for an action plan on gender-based violence and sexual violence against Sami women and girls. Consequently, a separate chapter of the current national action plan against domestic violence had been dedicated to violence and abuse in Sami communities. Developed in close collaboration with the Sami Parliament of Norway, the chapter underlined the need for linguistically and culturally sensitive support services that would help to generate greater mutual trust between Sami victims and public support service providers. Funds had already been allocated for the implementation of the action plan.

12. Partner homicides had accounted for 7 of the 29 murders committed in Norway in 2022. On the recommendation of the Commission on Partner Homicide, the Government had decided to establish a permanent national commission to review all murder cases where the victim had been a current or former partner of the perpetrator, with a view to learning from previous experience and more effectively combating severe partner violence and homicide. The work of the new commission was scheduled to start in 2024.

13. Aware of certain shortcomings in its provision of shelter services for domestic violence victims, the Government was revising the Crisis Centre Act. Among other things, that would aim to ensure that adequate services were provided for women with addiction issues and members of Sami communities, and that municipalities were successfully fulfilling their legal obligations to provide shelter services for all victims of domestic violence. The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs had organized several meetings to gather input from stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), shelters and local authorities, and a consultation paper would be ready for submission later in the year.

14. In recent years, his country had taken significant steps towards achieving gender balance in the law enforcement and justice sector. In the previous four years, women had accounted for over half of all new students enrolled on the mandatory undergraduate course at the Norwegian Police University College. Women also currently held a number of senior positions in the sector, including Minister of Justice and Public Security, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, National Police Commissioner, Head of the National Criminal Investigation Service and Head of the Norwegian Correctional Service Directorate.

15. **Ms. Matheson Mestad** (Norwegian National Human Rights Institution) said that, in 2022, the Office of the Auditor General had reported that the police and other public support services had not taken sufficient measures to reduce the risk of serious intimate partner violence and that they lacked the knowledge and skills required to bring adequate assistance to victims of honour violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Furthermore, it had concluded that the various support services were not sufficiently coordinated and that service providers were still uncertain as to when and whether they should report cases of suspected violence. Also in 2022, the public prosecuting authorities had published a report indicating that investigations into rape offences were still beset by difficulties, including long processing times. Vulnerable groups such as Sami women, lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons, women with substance abuse problems and older women faced particular challenges, often caused by a lack of knowledge about the violence and abuse that they experienced. Furthermore, the support services specifically provided for those groups were inadequate; for example, there was a shortage of shelters in traditional Sami areas.

16. Female prisoners too often served their sentences in poorer conditions than men, and rates of serious psychological and mental health illness were disproportionately high among female inmates. Only two days previously, female inmates who were extremely unwell had had to be transferred from Bredtveit prison because the site was not equipped with the necessary resources to guarantee their health and safety. The Government had a duty to ensure that the right to health of female prisoners was effectively upheld at all times.

17. Lastly, Norway had not taken sufficient measures to respond both to the Committee's previous recommendation that it should review its climate change and energy policies, specifically its policy on the extraction of oil and gas, and to the recommendations issued by the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud regarding the online dissemination of harmful gender stereotypes.

18. **Ms. Ameline** said that she would be interested to learn whether the State party was rethinking its gender strategies based on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and which issues it would be prioritizing in its gender equality policy, including in relation to peace and security. She would also be curious to know whether the State party had plans to involve NGOs in the achievement of its gender equality goals, and whether its foreign and development policies would support the achievement of those goals.

19. **Ms. Trettebergstuen** (Norway) said that her Government's gender equality policy for 2022–2025 had six priority areas: promoting economic independence and equality in working life; tackling gender-segregated educational choices; fostering a society free from violence, sexual harassment and online harassment; striving for freedom from negative social control and other related violence; improving women's health; and considering gender equality for men. Her Government had serious ambitions not only for the implementation of its gender policy at home but also for the inclusion of women's rights and gender equality as a central part of its foreign and development policy.

20. **A representative of Norway** said that, following the realization that COVID-19 response measures could affect gender equality, the Minister of Culture and Equality had tasked the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs with monitoring the effects of the pandemic on different groups vulnerable to discrimination, including on the grounds of gender. The Directorate reported regularly on the effects on gender equality and gave recommendations on crisis management.

21. **Ms. Trettebergstuen** (Norway) said that her Government was mindful of the effects of the pandemic on health workers, the majority of whom were women, and had introduced policies to improve working conditions for women workers, including those belonging to vulnerable groups. Such policies including promoting access to full-time work, which offered greater financial security.

22. **A representative of Norway** said that her Government was currently preparing a new action plan for gender equality and women's rights in foreign and development policy. The plan would take into consideration the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, including ensuring gender-responsive approaches to managing pandemics and other health-related issues and addressing the immediate and long-term effects of such crises on women and other groups.

23. Civil society organizations continued to play a key role in addressing the ongoing negative effects of the pandemic, including on sexual and reproductive health and rights, women's rights and gender equality. Ensuring continued support for locally based women's organizations, networks and movements, including women peacebuilders and women human rights defenders, was a priority for Norway.

24. Plans were in place to launch the fifth national action plan for women, peace and security later in 2023 and several ministries were currently working on an action plan to meet the country's obligations under Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in the coming three or four years. In addition, a number of women served as Norwegian special envoys and the Government ensured that women held key roles in delegations involved in peace processes.

25. **Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen** said, with reference to the visibility of the Convention, that she wondered whether the State party intended to make courses on anti-discrimination law at the University of Oslo available to members of the public. She would be interested to know whether the training for judges on the Convention that had been available since 2020 was obligatory, and whether the State party was monitoring the degree to which the Convention was mentioned in court rulings. Similarly, she wondered whether the State party had made any efforts to develop a training programme for prosecutors and law enforcement officers or other efforts to prosecute gender-based violence.

26. She would be grateful to know how the State party ensured that the disadvantages and inequalities experienced by women were not ignored in the implementation of gender-neutral legislation and policies. In that connection, she would welcome information about the progress made by the Ministry of Culture and Equality on drafting updated guidance on gender equality considerations in the Instructions for Official Studies. Noting that the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal appeared to be dismissing an unusually high number of the cases submitted to it, she wondered how the Tribunal's decisions were enforced and whether an independent monitoring system – within the competence of the Ombud, for example – was envisaged. As to the concerns raised about the potential for limitations being imposed on the rights of victims of violent crimes, including the right to compensation, she asked whether the State party intended to follow the recommendation issued by the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings in its 2022 evaluation report to allow victims' complaints to be considered without obtaining the consent of the alleged perpetrator. Similarly, she wondered whether the State party had examined the potential impact on victims' access to justice of proposed amendments to legislation governing the provision of free legal aid. If those amendments were approved, how would the State party ensure that crisis centres were able to provide high-quality legal assistance to victims of trafficking in persons?

27. **Ms. Trettebergstuen** (Norway) said that a review of the current mechanisms through which the provisions of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act were enforced might help to ensure effective access to justice for women in cases of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. Such a review would include input from the Ombud, the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal, civil society organizations and the Committee itself, through its comments and recommendations issued as part of the current interactive dialogue.

28. **A representative of Norway** said that the provisions of the Convention had been incorporated into the Human Rights Act, which most lawyers were well versed in, and students at the University of Oslo were duly informed of the courses available to them. The Ombud also worked on raising awareness about the Convention. In addition, the national human rights institution was mandated to raise awareness about human rights, including by offering guidance to individuals on national and international complaint procedures, and to promote training, education and research on human rights.

29. Explicit mention of the Convention was seldom made in the courts and the Tribunal, owing to the fact that its provisions had been incorporated into national law. The Tribunal was a low-threshold alternative to the courts and, as such, complainants could handle their own cases without the help of a lawyer. The Tribunal's decisions were worded clearly, so as to be accessible to all persons, including those without a legal background.

30. **A representative of Norway** said that the Ministry of Justice and Public Security was currently drafting a proposal for a new legal aid scheme, in line with a recommendation

contained in a comprehensive report issued in 2020 by a committee tasked with evaluating the scheme. Other recommendations in that report included changing the types of cases covered by the scheme and granting State legal aid in discrimination cases only when recommended by the Ombud.

31. Following enactment of the Compensation for Violent Crime Act, complainants were no longer required to prove that an injury had resulted from the alleged offence. As a result, victims of domestic violence would likely be able to obtain compensation more easily. Other measures improving the rights of victims of violent crimes had recently been introduced and would safeguard women's rights.

32. The National Courts Administration was the body responsible for the professional development of judges, offering training programmes as well as financial support to allow judges to take classes and courses. The introductory course for newly appointed judges included information on the Convention.

33. **A representative of Norway** said that prison officers were required to complete a two-year basic educational programme which included extensive instruction on human rights issues. In addition, certain prison staff members had been assigned the task of safeguarding women's needs and rights when in custody and while serving sentences. As for the training of police officers and prosecutors, the Norwegian Police University College organized annual training events and postgraduate courses on the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence and rape. While violence against women was not covered as a stand-alone subject at undergraduate level, it was included as part of a number of other subjects.

34. **A representative of Norway** said that centres supporting victims of violence and trafficking in persons often worked together with legal aid associations; lawyers from such associations might visit centres on a weekly basis to offer legal aid to victims.

35. **A representative of Norway** said that the Tribunal, unlike its predecessor the Ombud, was not competent to convert some cases into so-called "guidance cases". That change in competence might account for the higher number of cases recorded as dismissed. Furthermore, the Tribunal would dismiss a case under a wide range of circumstances.

36. The Tribunal was competent to order stoppage, remediation or other measures necessary to secure the cessation of discrimination or harassment or to prevent repetition. The Tribunal was also competent to set a deadline for compliance with that order and, in the event of non-compliance, to impose a fine. In 2022, the Tribunal had ordered stoppage in 17 cases and imposed fines for non-compliance in 10 cases. One of those cases had involved gender discrimination.

37. **Ms. Trettebergstuen** (Norway) said that her Government's efforts to promote gender equality included both gender-specific and gender-neutral legislation. The latter was always underpinned by recognition of the underrepresentation or disadvantaged position of women and girls. For instance, a recent review had secured the use of gender-neutral job titles in legislation, in order to avoid suggesting that certain jobs were for women and others for men. Gender-neutral legislation had been and continued to be important in ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women. Nevertheless, vigilance was required to ensure that such legislation was gender-sensitive in practice. Needless to say, her Government made use of gender-specific legislation where appropriate.

38. **A representative of Norway** said that comprehensive guidance on the Instructions for Official Studies was available, under which equality of opportunity and discrimination must be assessed if they were considered to be relevant. A recent evaluation of the Instructions had found that there was room for improvement in considering such questions.

39. Under amendments to the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act that had entered into force in 2020, public authorities were duty bound to make active, targeted and systematic efforts to promote equality and prevent discrimination in all of their activities and to issue statements about their work on equality issues. Obligations to prevent harassment, sexual harassment and gender-based violence and to counter stereotyping were explicitly provided for under the amended Act.

40. **A representative of Norway** said that all relevant ministries were currently considering the recommendations made by the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, including that urging the Government to facilitate access to State compensation in cases in which no criminal proceedings had been instituted against the alleged perpetrator. It was currently too early to determine to what degree the Government would be able to follow that recommendation.

41. **Ms. Akia** said that she wished to learn more about the reasons behind the high number of cases being received by the Tribunal and the measures that the Government was taking to reduce that number. The Committee had been informed that many complainants had not received any guidance on submitting cases to the Tribunal. If that were so, she would be grateful to know the reasons behind it and the efforts being made to ensure that complainants received guidance. She wondered whether the current system for ensuring the provision of guidance had been evaluated and, if so, how successful it had been in ensuring access to justice for victims of discrimination.

42. The Committee welcomed efforts to increase representation of women through the proposal of a new gender equality bill that would require companies to ensure that at least 40 per cent of their board positions were held by women. However, the Committee had received reports that women comprised only 27 per cent of executives and 32 per cent of board members in the 200 largest companies in Norway. She would welcome information on any measures being taken by the Government to sensitize private companies to the importance of respecting quotas, as well as on any other measures being taken to ensure the representation of women, and the sustainability of that representation, in executive positions.

43. **Ms. Trettebergstuen** (Norway) said that private companies in Norway were currently not required to adhere to quota rules. That, in conjunction with the low rate of representation of women in executive positions, was the reason why the Government had proposed a new bill to require them to do so.

44. **A representative of Norway** said that one reason behind the high number of cases received by the Tribunal compared to those received by the Ombud could indeed be the change in competence to convert cases to “guidance cases”, but the Government would conduct a review to discover more. As to current efforts, NGOs and the Ombud were being proactive in their roles of alerting the Ministry of Culture and Equality and the Tribunal to the fact that numbers were high.

45. **Ms. Trettebergstuen** (Norway) said that another reason behind the high number of cases could be the Government’s efforts to facilitate access to complaint procedures and guidance thereon.

46. **A representative of Norway** said that the current model of divided responsibility between the Ombud and the Tribunal had been in place for five years. The role of the Ombud in ensuring equal opportunities had been strengthened and it could be more proactive in providing individual guidance since it was no longer required to handle complaints in a neutral manner.

47. **Ms. Hacker** said that she wished to know why the number of reported cases of forced marriage, female genital mutilation and negative social control had increased since 2019 and what had been done to address those issues, especially when they involved girls. She would be interested to learn what measures had been taken to increase the capacity of the authorities and public support services to handle cases of harmful practices, in the light of a 2022 report by the Office of the Auditor General that had found the authorities’ knowledge and competence to be lacking. It would be useful to have information on how the inclusion of teaching on gender equality in the national curriculum had helped challenge gender stereotypes. She wondered whether the State party had planned any follow-up research on the impact of changes within the curriculum. If so, she would welcome details of the study and, if not, she would like to know how the State party had determined that education had been effective in tackling gender stereotypes. She would be interested to hear how the State party addressed the reported increase in violence against girls by their peers. She wondered whether the overrepresentation of women in the public sector, part-time work and non-managerial positions was due to gender stereotypes and, if so, what was done to combat them; whether campaigns to encourage men to care for older persons by emphasizing technical

aspects of care work were in fact perpetuating stereotypes; and whether any follow-up assessments were carried out to ensure that the State party was not pushing women to do more family care work.

48. It would be helpful to know what specific measures were being taken to combat sexist hate speech and why the Government was reluctant to criminalize it, despite the prevalence of online hate speech. She asked what the outcomes of the strategy against hate speech had been since 2020 and what the role of the national centre of excellence was.

49. **Ms. Trettebergstuen** (Norway) said that a proposal had been made to require 40 per cent of large companies' board members to be women, in line with quotas for public and State-owned enterprises. A consultation process was under way until March 2023 to decide on the definition of a large company. With regard to eliminating gender stereotypes, financial aid for NGOs working on gender equality had been increased.

50. **A representative of Norway** said that the major private sector companies were rated and mapped to monitor their gender balance. According to 2022 data, less than 16 per cent of chief executive officers were female, approximately 13 per cent of chairs of company boards were women and just over a quarter of executive committee members were women. Although companies that were subject to gender quota legislation had more than twice as many women on their boards as other companies, the proportion of female executive committee members was approximately the same, which suggested that quotas had little effect on the gender balance at the top management levels of private companies. The Government was holding public consultations on a proposal to introduce a certification for equality and diversity within companies, which would provide an incentive for improvement. Details on how the mechanism would work had yet to be established.

51. **A representative of Norway**, speaking via video link, said that the curricula for primary and secondary school education had been renewed and gender was a central theme. Topics such as democracy and citizenship, sustainable development, and public health and life skills were also covered. The new curricula would be evaluated in the coming two years.

52. **A representative of Norway** said that combating negative social control, honour-related violence and harmful practices was a high priority and was one of the four pillars of the Government's integration policy. An action plan was currently in place to combat such issues. The cause of the increased numbers of reported cases of female genital mutilation and negative social control was unknown, but they were expected to be linked to increased awareness among the Norwegian population.

53. **A representative of Norway** said that the Ministry of Health and Care Services had adopted a strategy to support family caregivers. The Health Personnel Commission was preparing a report that covered gender-related issues and all stakeholders were welcome to provide input until early May 2023.

54. **A representative of Norway** said that, in 2020, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security had assessed whether section 185 of the Penal Code, which concerned hate speech, should be expanded to include hate speech towards any person on the grounds of gender. In the ensuing public consultation, some organizations had expressed concern that broadening its scope might undermine the protection of the particularly vulnerable groups that were currently covered by the provision. The Ministry had found that it was unclear whether incorporating gender as a basis for discrimination was the best means to combat harassment of women and had concluded that it was not appropriate to amend section 185. He wished to underscore that there were several other provisions in the Penal Code that applied to the harassment of women and girls, which included verbal harassment.

55. **Ms. Trettebergstuen** (Norway) said that the mandate of the Freedom of Expression Commission was to review areas such as social media, the legal and economic frameworks for freedom of expression, fake news, identity politics, cancel culture, and illegal and harmful content online. In its report published in August 2022, the Commission had noted that women faced more gender-related harassment than men. The report had been open for public consultation and the Ministry of Culture and Equality was set to begin its follow-up in due course.

56. The international dimension of hate speech must also be addressed, since social media provided a platform for hate speech. Accordingly, the Nordic Council of Ministers had commissioned a study on the regulation of online hate speech in Nordic countries in 2017 and had formed a think tank in 2022 to assess the influence of major information and communication technology companies on democracy. The think tank comprised a number of experts from Nordic countries and would present its recommendations during the first half of 2023. A white paper on sexual harassment, which included online harassment, was currently being drafted.

57. **A representative of Norway** said that the Strategy against Hate Speech, which established preventive and educational measures to combat harassment, had been evaluated in 2020. Norway had strong institutions that researched hate speech and the measures under the strategy were constantly reviewed and developed. The C-REX Centre for Research on Extremism, which was funded by the Government, and a strategy on video games both addressed gender-related hate speech and online violence.

58. **A representative of Norway** said that the Government was preparing a white paper that examined the dangers that the Internet posed to children and considered how to promote safe use of the Internet and raise awareness among adults, especially parents and teachers, of the risks that children faced in the digital environment.

59. **A representative of Norway** said that under the Media Liability Act, which had entered into force in July 2020, persons who published any form of media could be held criminally responsible for hate speech. Previously, journalists could be held liable only for print media and traditional broadcasting.

60. An initiative had also been launched to address gender stereotypes in the labour market and encourage girls between 13 and 19 years of age to study science, technology, engineering or mathematics. Under the initiative, women who worked in technology-related fields were invited to give talks in schools and, in 2021, 1,600 girls had visited over 60 technology companies. All public authorities had a duty to introduce measures to counter gender stereotypes.

61. **A representative of Norway** said that the gender gap in employment in Norway was one of the smallest compared with European Union countries. Free public education, financial support for students, parental benefits, the statutory right of parents to paid leave to care for sick children and flexible working hours were important measures in that respect. Increasing access to affordable day care was also important: kindergartens were subsidized for over 90 per cent of Norwegian children.

62. **A representative of Norway** said that the Directorate of Children, Youth and Family Affairs was responsible for addressing gender-based stereotypes within the education system. It had created a statistics hub and published research on education and gender-related career choices. In 2021, the Directorate had launched a website containing information about specific measures that schools and municipalities could take to promote gender equality in education. It had piloted one project to train teachers and careers advisers on gender equality and another to encourage men to enter the health-care profession.

63. **A representative of Norway** said that a study from 2022 had shown that just under half of children between 13 and 18 years of age had been sent indecent images over the Internet, and many more cases went unreported. The police had developed material to raise awareness of the issue, and the National Criminal Investigation Service had launched a campaign to prevent the sharing of illegal images among young people. In 2015, the Service had launched a Facebook page to receive questions and information related to online sexual abuse and provide advice on crime prevention. Several police districts had established online patrols.

64. **The Chair** asked whether the State party intended to criminalize the sterilization of children without their consent, in line with article 39 of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), and what measures were in place to ensure reparation for victims.

65. **Ms. Bethel** said that she wished to know what the timeline was for the amendment of Penal Code provisions on the offence of rape. She would be interested to hear what major

factors accounted for the high number of rape cases that had been closed or where the accused had been acquitted, and what measures had been taken to address them. She wondered whether steps had been taken to establish a system to collect data on gender-based violence and abuse against Sami women, women and girls with disabilities, ethnic minority women and lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons, including with regard to their access to, and interactions with, the police and health and support services. It would also be useful to know how the State party ensured that adequate risk assessments were undertaken and measures adopted to prevent domestic violence and intimate partner homicide; to enhance the capacities of the police and support services to prevent such homicides; and to prioritize gender-based violence cases by securing sufficient police resources. She would also like to know how reverse domestic violence alarms were promoted and used effectively; how the implementation of the Crisis Centre Act was standardized across all municipalities; and what steps had been taken to ensure adequate and equal protection and services for victims of violence. She asked whether a crisis centre for the Sami community would be re-established and what specific steps had been taken to afford victims of gender-based violence adequate access to legal assistance and support services.

66. **Ms. Hacker** said that she would welcome a comparison of the measures taken to encourage girls into the science, technology, engineering and mathematics sectors and those adopted to encourage boys into occupations traditionally associated with women. She wished to know what special services were in place for child victims of female genital mutilation and forced marriage that addressed the fact that they were minors.

67. **Ms. Manalo** said that she wished to know why the State party had not incorporated the Istanbul Convention into its legislation.

68. **Ms. Trettebergstuen** (Norway) said that the Government would take measures to strengthen its policy on domestic violence and rape, inter alia by establishing a permanent commission on partner homicide.

69. **A representative of Norway** said that abortion or sterilization was permitted in the absence of free and informed consent if the person concerned had a serious mental illness or impairment which meant that he or she lacked the capacity to express an opinion on the procedure, and if a significant improvement in his or her condition was not expected. Applications for sterilization could be made by legal guardians and were granted against the person's wishes only if the procedure constituted the best means of preventing pregnancy. The use of force to carry out sterilization was not permitted. A guardian could also apply for an abortion without a woman's consent if she had a serious mental disorder or intellectual disability and was unable to understand the significance of the procedure, and if the procedure was clearly in her interest. The County Governor decided whether those conditions had been met.

70. **A representative of Norway** said that domestic violence had been prioritized by the Director General of Public Prosecutions, meaning that cases must be given priority regardless of the resources available. The Director General was also updating guidelines on investigating family and domestic violence. Some of the recommendations contained in a 2020 report by a committee on intimate partner homicide, including the establishment of a permanent commission to address the phenomenon, had been implemented and an "escalation plan" was being drawn up to enhance measures combating violence and sexual abuse against children and domestic violence.

71. Police officers were required to use the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide (SARA) and a separate risk assessment tool for honour-based violence. SARA coordinators in each police district worked with stakeholders, coordinated police efforts to prevent domestic abuse and participated in skills development and training. While the risk assessment tools were implemented effectively in some police districts, improvement was required in others, and an evaluation was planned for 2023. Instructions had been developed for risk assessments and the prevention of intimate partner and honour-related violence.

72. Eighty-four perpetrators of domestic violence had been ordered to wear reverse domestic violence alarms since 2014. Research had shown that a lack of knowledge and cooperation between investigators and lawyers were the main reasons for the low usage rates; several measures had been adopted in response, including the development of instructions

for using the alarms, training for police officers and prosecutors, and cooperation between police districts and police information and communication technology departments. Reverse alarms could only be imposed as part of a sentence, although consideration was being given to allowing their use as part of restraining orders. A national survey on violence and abuse would soon be published with the aim of providing up-to-date statistics, gaining an understanding of the connections between violence and abuse, on the one hand, and health and behavioural problems, on the other, and assessing the assistance provided to victims.

73. **A representative of Norway** said that a public consultation on amendments to the provisions of the Penal Code concerning rape was under way, although a timeline for the amendments had not been defined. While it was unclear why so many rape cases were closed, the reason might relate to difficulties in gathering the necessary evidence. Nevertheless, improvements had been made to police interviews of persons who reported rape. The Penal Code had been amended in order to implement the Istanbul Convention fully; that Convention afforded States parties discretion as to the method of its implementation, and its provisions did not lend themselves to direct application in Norwegian law. The Istanbul Convention was not among the human rights instruments that had been incorporated into the Human Rights Act and thus took precedence over Norwegian legislation, although the courts' interpretation of Norwegian law aligned with international law, including the Istanbul Convention, as far as possible.

74. **A representative of Norway** said that a chapter of the Sixth Action Plan against Domestic Violence was dedicated to violence and abuse in Sami communities and had been developed in close cooperation with the Sami Parliament. The Action Plan contained measures to improve knowledge of Sami language and culture among police and support services, and funding had been allocated to the prevention of violence and abuse in Sami communities and to further research into their root causes.

75. **A representative of Norway** said that the Sixth Action Plan against Domestic Violence provided for the reopening of the Sami crisis centre in Karasjok, which had been closed in 2019 because it had not conformed to the relevant standards. The Karasjok municipal authorities were examining how crisis centre services could be provided, with support from the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs and the National Sami Competence Centre. Municipalities implemented legislation, including the Crisis Centre Act, in accordance with local needs; that approach resulted in disparities, and consideration was being given to how the Act's implementation could be improved across Norway.

76. **A representative of Norway** said that the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs gathered, processed and developed knowledge on equality, discrimination and living conditions for women, as well as on persons with disabilities and lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex persons. An online tool provided access to gender equality statistics, including data on violence and figures from shelters for victims of incest and sexual abuse. A survey on living conditions had detected higher rates of violence among Sami communities than among non-Sami communities. Obtaining data on multiple forms of discrimination was challenging because relatively few persons suffered such discrimination in Norway and there was a reluctance to participate in surveys.

77. **A representative of Norway** said that a pilot project had been launched to encourage boys in secondary and upper secondary schools to enter the health and care sectors through the provision of role models. The project, due to conclude in September 2023, would inform the development of a national project with the same aim.

78. **A representative of Norway** said that victim support centres had been established in all police districts to provide guidance on criminal proceedings, assist with applications for compensation and liaise with municipal services, such as family welfare authorities and health services. They also provided access to lawyers, and their services could be used by victims who had not lodged reports with the police.

79. **Ms. Bethel** said that she wondered whether the low prosecution rates for rape were a result of the definition of the offence; the courts appeared to be required to consider whether a range of qualifying conditions had been met, rather than assessing whether a woman had consented to sex.

80. **Ms. Dettmeijer-Vermeulen** said that the Committee would welcome information on the status of creation of a standardized system for identifying and following up on women victims of trafficking in persons and of efforts to prosecute perpetrators and impose significant sentences, including details of the sentences handed down. She wished to know which of the recommendations of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings would be implemented and what steps had been taken to that end, particularly concerning the establishment of a national referral mechanism. She would also appreciate information on the results of the multiple systems estimation of victims of trafficking, and she asked what proportion of the victims identified had been women and girls trafficked for sexual and labour purposes. It would be good to have details of measures to protect women and young girls from trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, including online exploitation, in the State party and abroad, and to detect and prevent that crime. She also wished to know whether judges and prosecutors received training on trafficking and whether it formed part of the legal education curriculum. She asked whether the decision to deport several women victims of trafficking because the crime had not occurred in the State party had been taken using a gender perspective.

81. Lastly, she wished to know how regular and reliable funding was provided to NGOs operating shelters for victims of trafficking and providing assistance for women leaving prostitution; what support was provided to women who wished to leave prostitution; whether centres similar to the Pro Sentret centre would be established across the State party; how the right of women working in prostitution to health care was guaranteed, regardless of citizenship; and whether criminalization of the consumption of prostitution had endangered women's health and what assistance had been provided in that regard.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.