



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

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

Summary record of the 421st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 2 February 1999, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. González

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

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

Third and fourth periodic reports of China (continued) (CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4 and Add.1 and 2; CEDAW/C/1999/I/CRP.1/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Qin Huasun (China) and Mr. Lan, Mr. Wong, Ms. Tang, Mr. Gould, Ms. Cheng, Ms. Mak Sin-ping and Ms. Mak (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China) took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Qin** Huasun (China) said that he wished to clarify a number of points raised the previous day. First, he stressed that microcredit had been instituted in rural areas at the beginning of the 1990s. With the help of expertise from Bangladesh, the system had become widespread in poverty-stricken areas around the country, the main beneficiaries being rural women. Programmes were also run by non-governmental organizations; the Happiness Project, for example, provided microcredit for mothers of families. His second clarification related to female illiteracy: 15.8 per cent of the population was illiterate, but women constituted 70 per cent of that proportion. Thirdly, regarding the implementation of labour and other law in economic development zones, he said that domestic laws applied in all such zones. Fourthly, there was specific provision for women prisoners in areas of ethnic minorities as well as elsewhere.

3. Lastly, he said that women's rights represented but one aspect of human rights; the Committee was not a major forum for the discussion of human rights questions, on which there were many divergent views, sometimes expressed confrontationally. China was a developing country doing its best to implement the Convention. It welcomed the Committee's constructive advice. It would be beneficial to all members of the committee to leave the discussion of human rights to the Human Rights Committee.

4. **Mr. Lan** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China) said that under the principle of "one country, two systems", the capitalist system and way of life would remain unchanged in the Region for 50 years. Hong Kong had a good human rights record, and the framework protecting those rights was considered even sounder than in the past. He enumerated the rights

and freedoms listed in paragraphs 30 and 31 of the report (CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4/Add.2), adding that the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance and the United Nations human rights treaties applicable to Hong Kong would continue to be implemented. In that connection he informed the Committee that the Region had just submitted its first report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, evidence that the protection afforded to Hong Kong residents had not been changed in any way. After outlining the women's rights described in Part II, paragraphs 5 and 15, of the report, he noted that the Equal Opportunities Commission, in addition to the duties described in Part II, paragraphs 11 and 12, was responsible for enforcing the three anti-discrimination ordinances. Three codes of practice on employment had also been issued. The Commission had been in place for over two years, supported by a subvention of more than HK\$ 170 million from the Government.

5. In order to eliminate any unfair treatment of women, the Government had enacted more than 20 amendments to six ordinances from 1996 to 1998 and would continue to modify all legislation containing discriminatory provisions against women. The position and status of women had improved. In 1997 women had accounted for 39 per cent of the total working population. Currently, two out of the three highest ranking government officials — the Chief Secretary for Administration and the Secretary for Justice — were women. Women made up 33 per cent of the civil service. Almost a third of the Executive Council were women.

6. The proportion of women engaged in occupations traditionally dominated by men had risen gradually. Of newly recruited inspectors in the police force over the past 12 months, 45.3 per cent were women and in the Fire Services Department there were five female Station Officers, who actively directed fire-fighting work. In the professional field, women accounted for 34 per cent of lawyers, 36.3 per cent of accountants and 21.3 per cent of doctors.

7. The Government was committed to equal opportunities in education. Since 1976, children were entitled to receive nine years' free and universal basic education. More than half of university graduates were females.

8. Women's health had always been given high priority. In addition to the information provided in

paragraphs 123 and 127, he said that the infant mortality rate in Hong Kong remained among the lowest in the world. In 1997 it was 4 per 1,000 live births, while the maternal mortality rate was 2 per 100,000 total births. In addition, life expectancy for women had reached an average of 82.2 years, as compared with 76.8 years for men. The Government would adopt every possible measure to strive for women's welfare. The policy groups chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration and attended by senior representatives of the relevant bureaux provided the necessary coordination on all matters concerning women.

9. The Convention had been extended to Hong Kong in October 1996 and had remained in force since reunification. The People's Republic of China had entered seven reservations and declarations in respect of provisions applying to Hong Kong. After careful consideration, the Government of the Region had decided not to make any changes, but it would review the applicability of the reservations from time to time.

10. Turning to the list of questions contained in document CEDAW/C/1999/I/CRP.1/Add.1, he said, in relation to question 42, that, as indicated in his introductory remarks, residents of Hong Kong had even better protection since reunification with the Mainland, for their rights were entrenched in the Basic Law, effectively the written constitutional document of the Region. As for the Convention, the Government of the People's Republic of China had stated that existing reservations would be maintained and the reservation to article 29, paragraph 1, would be extended to the Region. The Government of the Region was fully aware that its obligations under the Convention could not be taken lightly; however, it might not be possible for them to be discharged, given the Region's special circumstances.

11. The reservation to article 9 had already been removed since it was no longer relevant, and the remaining reservations would be retained only so long as they were necessary to preserve laws and policies that protected the interests of the community as a whole. Should changing circumstances suggest that any of them might no longer be necessary, withdrawal could be considered.

12. In response to question 43, he said that the Government's unfailing efforts in promoting the strategic objectives of the Beijing Declaration and

Platform for Action had already been referred to in the report.

13. In reply to question 44, he said that the policy groups mentioned earlier provided the necessary coordination on policies concerning women. The Home Affairs Bureau had worked for the promotion of the Convention since its extension to Hong Kong in 1996. Promoting gender equality was also one of the major functions of the Equal Opportunities Commission.

14. With regard to question 45, he said that men and women were considered on an equal footing for appointments to advisory and statutory bodies, on the basis of their expertise, experience and commitment to community service. The database of those willing to serve was regularly updated and expanded; members of women's organizations and professional bodies were always encouraged to indicate their interest. Indeed, the percentage of women appointed to such bodies had increased. In 1998 some 20 per cent of the members of such bodies were women, as against 16.6 per cent in 1995. Over the past 10 years the number of women appointed had more than doubled.

15. **Mr. Wong** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), replying to question 46, said that the Government of the Special Administrative Region believed the definition of sex discrimination contained in the Sex Discrimination Ordinance to be consistent with article 1 of the Convention. The definition included both direct and indirect discrimination. The Ordinance applied with respect to employment; education; the provision of goods and services; the disposal or management of premises; eligibility to vote for and to be elected or appointed to advisory bodies; government activities and the activities of clubs.

16. **Mr. Lan** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) said, with regard to question 47, that the Equal Opportunities Commission was an independent statutory body established under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance in May 1996. Its responsibilities were to oversee the implementation of that Ordinance, the Disability Discrimination Ordinance and the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance. It also worked to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of gender, disability or family status through conciliation, investigation, publicity, public education, legal assistance or court action, as appropriate. The enactment of the ordinances and the establishment of the Commission had contributed to

the full implementation of the Convention in the Region. The Commission's 1997-1998 report had been tabled at a sitting of the Legislative Council in December 1998; however, as far as he knew, the legislators had proposed no further action. The Commission maintained a close liaison with non-governmental organizations, which expressed their concerns and views to the Commission.

17. In response to question 48, he said that under the Domestic Violence Ordinance, the Court could grant restraining orders or other injunctions on one party to a marriage on application by the other. If actual bodily harm had been done, the court could authorize the police to arrest the person breaching the terms of the injunction. He drew attention to the services offered to victims of domestic violence, listed in paragraph 35 of the report, particularly subparagraphs (b), (h) and (i). A battered wife could also join one of the support groups organized by the Group Work Units of the Social Welfare Department. Some battered women had been assisted in forming mutual-help groups under the auspices of Government-supported agencies.

18. **Ms. Mak** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) said, in connection with question 49, that a number of measures were being taken to prevent domestic violence. Families could seek advice at Family Activity and Resource Centres, while individuals and couples needing immediate assistance could call a telephone hotline. The interdisciplinary Working Group on Battered Spouses had launched an educational campaign to warn the public of the destructive effects of domestic violence and encourage families at risk to seek early professional help. An information packet on services for battered spouses had been distributed in November 1998. There were three shelters for women victims of violence and their children, each providing 40 places. The average utilization rate during the period from October 1997 to September 1998 had been 69 per cent. The subject of domestic violence had been incorporated into the police recruits' training course in 1997, while workers from one of the women's shelters gave lectures to serving officers.

19. **Mr. Lan** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), replying to question 50, said that sexual violence against women, including incest, rape and sodomy, was prohibited by the Crimes Ordinance. The measures implemented in Hong Kong to combat that phenomenon were enumerated in his delegation's

written answers, which had been circulated informally. Victims of sexual violence received trauma counselling and other support from case workers attached to Hong Kong's 65 Family Services Centres.

20. Sexual harassment was prohibited by the Sex Discrimination Ordinance. The problem was being addressed by the Equal Opportunities Commission through awareness-raising initiatives, including the publication of a training module aimed at helping individuals and organizations to prevent and deal with cases of sexual harassment.

21. **Mr. Wong** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) said, in reply to question 51, that, under the Inland Revenue (Amendment) Ordinance of 1989, married women could choose to be assessed separately from their husbands for taxation purposes. The 1997 amendment to the Marriage Ordinance provided that either the mother or the father could consent to the marriage of a child under 21 years of age. Under the Matrimonial Causes (Amendments) Ordinance of 1995, both men and women could be cited as co-respondents in petitions for divorce on grounds of adultery, whereas, in the past, women could be made co-respondents only at the discretion of the judge.

22. **Miss Tang** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) said, in connection with question 52, that the baseline survey on public perceptions of equal opportunities had indicated that women and respondents with higher levels of education were more sensitive to sex discrimination in the workplace and more supportive of women's participation in political and public life. Dismissal on grounds of pregnancy, sexual harassment in the workplace and gender-based differences with respect to benefits had been identified by both male and female respondents as the most widespread forms of sex discrimination. The Equal Opportunities Commission had taken a number of measures based on the outcome of the survey, including the holding of a series of talks to raise awareness of equal opportunities legislation and the publication of leaflets aimed at promoting equal opportunities in the workplace as part of good management practices.

23. **Mr. Lan** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) said, with regard to question 53, that the Commission had allocated considerable sums of money to educational campaigns intended to eliminate gender stereotypes. The concept of equal opportunities for

men and women had been incorporated into the school curriculum, and the Education Department had produced teaching materials on the subject. Care was taken in developing new textbooks to avoid gender bias.

24. **Ms. Cheng** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), replying to the questions posed under article 6, said, in connection with question 54, that prostitution was not criminalized in Hong Kong, but prostitutes faced prosecution and custodial sentences of up to six months for soliciting in public. A client would be prosecuted only if he committed some other offence, such as engaging in sexual relations with a minor. The Crimes Ordinance, in sections 131 and 139 respectively, stipulated penalties for the offences of keeping or managing a vice establishment and procuring or living off the earnings of a prostitute.

25. Turning to question 55, she said that the trafficking of persons to or from Hong Kong for the purpose of prostitution was prohibited under section 129 of the Crimes Ordinance. Under the Offences Against the Person Ordinance, the maximum penalty for the kidnapping or sale of a person was life imprisonment.

26. **Mr. Lan** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), replying to the questions posed under article 7, said, with regard to question 56, that the Government of the Region was actively promoting women's participation in political life, particularly in rural areas. In accordance with the model rules on the election of village representatives, ballots must be conducted on a one-person-one-vote basis, and representatives elected under any other procedure were not recognized by the Government. Data for the period from 1988 to 1998 showed a gradual increase in women's representation in the Region's various executive and legislative bodies.

27. In response to question 57, concerning the number of women at each level of the judiciary, he drew attention to the statistics contained in his delegation's written answers, which had been circulated informally. He stressed that candidates for judicial appointments were assessed on the basis of their professional competence and personal conduct and that gender was not a factor.

28. Turning to question 58 (article 10), he said that sex education was included in the curricula for all schools, from the pre-primary to the senior-secondary

level. The Guidelines on Sex Education in Schools, issued by the Education Department in 1997, specified the minimum time which should be devoted to sex education in the course of the academic year in each type of school.

29. **Mr. Gould** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) said, in connection with question 59 (article 11), that there was no evidence of discrimination in employment against women over 30. Moreover, according to the most recent statistics, the unemployment rate was actually lower for women than for men. It was true that older women were disadvantaged when seeking re-employment because they lacked training and qualifications. In order to address that problem, the Employees Retraining Scheme was providing special courses. Women aged 30 to 50 had accounted for 60 per cent of the beneficiaries. Guidelines to help employers eliminate discrimination in the workplace, including on grounds of age, had been widely distributed.

30. **Mr. Lan** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), replying to question 60, said that, while the Sex Discrimination Ordinance did not refer specifically to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, in the Code of Practice on Employment employers were encouraged to implement the principle progressively. Furthermore, it was unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a woman in the terms of employment offered to her.

31. With regard to question 61, he said that sexual harassment in the workplace was prohibited by the Sex Discrimination Ordinance. It was defined as any unwelcome sexual advance to a woman made in circumstances in which a reasonable person would have anticipated that she would be offended, humiliated or intimidated. It was also unlawful for a person, alone or together with others, to engage in conduct of a sexual nature which created a sexually hostile working environment. The Equal Opportunities Commission had received 72 complaints of sexual harassment, with one resulting in litigation.

32. **Ms. Mak** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), replying to question 62, said that no distinction was made with respect to the provision of child-care services between private-sector and public-sector employees. Currently, there were more than 1,600 places in crèches and almost 42,000 in nurseries. State-subsidized residential crèches and nurseries

provided a further 200 and 132 places respectively. The Government of the Region had secured resources to provide 3,197 additional day nursery places by the year 2000.

33. **Mr. Gould** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), responding to questions 63 and 64, said that the purpose of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance enacted in 1997 was to extend the scope of application of the legislation on occupational safety and health to all workplaces, both industrial and non-industrial. Under the Ordinance, the Government was entitled to prescribe minimum safety and health standards.

34. With regard to question 64, he said that, before the Sex Discrimination Ordinance had come into force, some employers had devised pension schemes which differentiated between men and women with respect to the age of retirement, the contribution rate and the level of benefits. Such differences had not then been unlawful. A reservation had been entered to article 11, paragraph 1, in order to enable those schemes to continue, given the impracticability of equalizing their terms retrospectively.

35. Regarding the reservation to article 11, paragraph 2, he said that the qualifying period of employment for entitlement to maternity leave with pay and employment protection for pregnant women struck a balance between the rights and interests of employers and employees.

36. **Mr. Lan** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), replying to question 65, said that both migrant and local workers enjoyed the benefits conferred by the Employment Ordinance. In fact, Hong Kong's labour legislation also provided for a minimum wage in respect of migrant workers, including domestic employees, and contained provisions regarding their food and accommodation. In addition, they were entitled to free medical treatment. Local workers were not covered by those provisions.

37. **Ms. Mak Sin-ping** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), replying to question 66 (article 12), said that the Offences against the Person Ordinance provided for medical termination of pregnancy by a registered medical practitioner in an approved hospital or clinic if two registered medical practitioners were of the opinion, formed in good faith, that continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk to the physical or mental health of either the pregnant

woman or the child. Family planning services were available to women in maternal and child health centres located throughout the territory of the Special Administrative Region for a nominal fee of 1 Hong Kong dollar.

38. **Mr. Lan** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), responding to the questions posed under article 15, said, in connection with question 67, that the freedom of movement of Hong Kong residents was guaranteed by article 31 of the Basic Law. A reservation had been entered to article 15, paragraph 4, to allow for the application of immigration legislation with respect to persons who did not have a lawful right to enter and remain in Hong Kong.

39. With regard to question 68, he said that the New Territories Land (Exemption) Ordinance had conferred upon women equal rights with men to inherit land or property in the New Territories in the absence of a will. Formerly, when a person died intestate, Chinese customary law had applied, entailing succession along the male line. The reservation entered with respect to article 15 allowed for the continuation of the small house policy described in paragraph 173 of the report, which was currently under review.

40. **Mr. Wong** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), replying to the questions posed under article 16, said, in connection with question 69, that Hong Kong's laws on family life were consistent with article 16 of the Convention.

41. With regard to question 70, he said that there were no laws prohibiting cohabitation, which was a personal choice. Cohabitants enjoyed the same inheritance rights as husbands and wives, providing there was a will. Disputes between cohabitants concerning custody, parental rights or maintenance were settled in court in accordance with the Guardianship of Minors Ordinance. A woman cohabiting with a partner was entitled to the same protection under the Domestic Violence Ordinance as a married woman. Information as to whether persons were cohabiting must be handled in accordance with the data protection laws.

42. **Ms. Shalev** expressed appreciation to the Government for its high-quality reports and its commitment to guaranteeing basic rights and freedoms for Hong Kong citizens. She noted with satisfaction the active role of non-governmental organizations and

suggested that they should have input into the preparation of future reports.

43. While the Sex Discrimination Ordinance prohibited direct and indirect discrimination, it was a civil-law norm, not a constitutional one. Furthermore, while the Equal Opportunities Commission was doing a good job of resolving discrimination issues on a case-by-case basis, there was no national policy-making machinery. The Government should establish a proactive coordinating body.

44. She was concerned that the structure of the functional constituencies might be an obstacle to the fair representation of women in the government administration and in Parliament.

45. She urged the Government to re-examine its reservations with a view to removing them, particularly the reservations to article 2, article 4, paragraph 2, and article 11, paragraph 2. The Committee did not consider the laws protecting pregnancy and maternity to be in violation of the Convention.

46. Another source of concern was the continuing discrimination in pension schemes, as elderly women were a particularly vulnerable group.

47. Lastly, with regard to article 15, she urged the Government to re-examine the immigration laws and remove any discriminatory provisions with a view to withdrawing its reservation.

48. **Ms. Schöpp-Schilling** endorsed the comments made by the previous speaker concerning the need for national machinery for women's equality and the possibly discriminatory nature of the functional constituencies. She was also concerned at the failure to recognize home workers as a functional constituency.

49. With regard to the affirmative-action measures envisaged in article 4, paragraph 1, the Government should establish time frames and goals for increasing the number of women in senior administrative bodies.

50. **Ms. Açar**, referring to article 10, said that while it was satisfying to note that over 50 per cent of university graduates were women, the fact that male students were concentrated in science and technology, while female students were concentrated in liberal arts, needed to be addressed. It was unclear, for example, whether the continuing imbalance stemmed from early streaming in primary education or from a hidden curriculum in secondary education. The Government

should take steps to eliminate stereotyping in textbooks and should examine the gender composition of teaching staffs. She would also appreciate information on the status of gender and women's studies programmes.

51. **Ms. Manalo** said that despite her overall satisfaction with the Government's responses, she would be grateful for clarification of information she had just received concerning the Government's plans to cut the minimum wage of foreign and domestic helpers by 5 per cent. If the information was accurate, she urged the Government to rescind that step. Furthermore, she failed to understand why home workers should not be covered by occupational safety and health provisions.

52. While the Government had stated that prostitution was legal, it had not specified what health protection measures, if any, were available to prostitutes.

53. Since Hong Kong women were very active in small and medium-sized enterprises, it was difficult to understand why so few of them were in scientific and technical fields.

54. **Ms. Ryel** said that the legislation concerning equal pay for work of equal value was unclear. Since men and women frequently did not do the same work, but might do work of equal value, it was very important that the same criteria should be used in evaluating their work. The Governments of Sweden and New Zealand had set an example in that regard.

55. She commended the Government for establishing a database containing the names of women qualified to serve on advisory boards, as that would help to solve the problem of visibility.

56. Lastly, it was important for women to be elected to public office; women and men should be encouraged to vote for female candidates.

57. **Ms. Goonesekere** said that the national machinery against discrimination in Hong Kong, which concentrated on a complaints procedure, should perhaps be broadened to cover policy as well. The wide range of amendments to customary law in the New Territories should be reviewed along with the small house policy. It seemed to her that discrimination in favour of male indigenous villagers was inconsistent both with the Constitution and with the Convention.

58. On the subject of immigration, she said that since the full range of legal rights were afforded to cohabiting partners, discrimination against children born out of wedlock in the area of citizenship was surprising. She would also like more information about legal protection against abuse for migrant workers. Since Hong Kong took a regulatory approach to prostitution, it would be interesting to analyse whether that approach had the impact of fostering the trafficking in persons.

59. **Ms. Ouedraogo** said that she welcomed the fact that the Government accepted the use of special temporary measures under article 4 of the Convention in areas of greatest concern. In her view, placing women in decision-making positions should be a priority. The report showed that progress had been made, but there was far to go before equality was achieved. It might be necessary to set specific quotas for women's participation in order to achieve that goal.

60. The school drop-out rate for both boys and girls was alarmingly high and seemed to be on the rise. It was important to study the real causes of that phenomenon, and the Government should be encouraged to set up a global strategy, perhaps including affirmative action measures to encourage girls to remain in school. With regard to article 14, she understood that given the small size of Hong Kong, there were no rural areas as such, but the article also applied to the status of disadvantaged groups. She would be interested in hearing more about plans to meet the critical need for housing in the near future.

61. **Ms. Taya**, referring to paragraph 53 of the report, said that the fact that there were only 10 women out of 1,000 elected village representatives seemed to be a breach of the Sex Discrimination Ordinance of December 1996.

62. **The Chairperson**, speaking in her personal capacity, stressed the need to take affirmative action measures on behalf of women. She would like to learn more about the Village Committees, which were the foundation of political participation, and any efforts being made to encourage women's participation at that level. Women must be encouraged to take part in elections not only as part of the electorate but as candidates under equal conditions with men.

63. She welcomed the publication of the Convention in Hong Kong and its public distribution, but given the large population of the Region, many more copies

should have been made available. It might also be useful to have informational sessions on the provisions of the Convention.

64. **Mr. Lan** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) said, in response to questions regarding the preparation of the report, that it had been the practice since the mid-1990s for the Government to hold a full consultation process with non-governmental organizations and other constituent groups to listen to their views. An outline of the issues to be covered in the current report had also been published in advance of its preparation. Some members had also asked why the Government had not established a uniform "women's commission" to deal with all women's matters. It had been recognized, however, that women's concerns were multisectoral, and the current mechanism dealt with those concerns at the policy level. Moreover, with the establishment of the Equal Opportunities Commission, it had seemed redundant to create another mechanism strictly for women's concerns.

65. The functional constituency system for elections had been in place since 1985. That system was currently undergoing a transition towards one-person-one-vote elections. The situation would next be reviewed in 2007. The Government, although it had not viewed the system as discriminatory against women, since professional groups made up mainly of women (nurses and teachers, for example) were able to elect their own representatives, would give that aspect further study.

66. **Mr. Wong** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) said that the Court of Appeals had ruled only five days earlier that children born out of wedlock did have the right to vote in Hong Kong. The Government would take that decision into account in reviewing its reservations to the Convention.

67. **Mr. Gould** (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), in reply to questions regarding the status of foreign domestic helpers, said that under the terms of the current contract, employers could not pay less than the minimum allowable wage. That provision protected both the foreign worker from exploitation and domestic labourers from unfair competition from cheap foreign labour. After the latest review of the minimum allowable wage, which had taken into account the recession and unemployment rates, the Government

had decided to reduce the wage by 5 per cent for new contracts entered into after 3 February 1999.

68. The remaining differences noted in retirement schemes for women and men had been due to the practical problems involved in removing discriminatory provisions from the schemes, which could result in a change in existing benefits. An exemption was given for existing schemes, but less than 5 per cent of such schemes contained differences in benefits and were in the process of being phased out.

69. Regarding the questions on education in general, university teaching posts were subject to open recruitment, and there was no intent to discriminate. Reviews of textbooks were ongoing, and most publishing companies were complying with the government guidelines on preventing gender stereotyping.

70. **Mr. Qin Huasun** (China) said, in closing, that the separate consideration given to the report of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region demonstrated the fact that his Government was carrying out its policy of “one country, two systems” to the fullest extent. The experience of presenting the dual reports to the Committee would further enrich its implementation of that policy.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.