



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women
Seventy-third session**

Summary record of the 1690th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 2 July 2019, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Gbedemah

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

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

Second periodic report of Qatar (CEDAW/C/QAT/2; CEDAW/C/QAT/Q/2 and CEDAW/C/QAT/Q/2/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Qatar took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Al-Muraikhi** (Qatar) said that 2019 marked the tenth anniversary of the accession of Qatar to the Convention. To celebrate that occasion, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Doha International Family Institute had organized a forum to examine the progress achieved during the previous decade and to identify future priorities. The forum had concluded that efforts were still needed to strengthen national mechanisms for women's affairs and to bring legislation more fully into line with the Convention.
3. The report before the Committee was the outcome of a process of dialogue and cooperation among all bodies concerned with issues affecting women, including the National Human Rights Committee. The report and the replies to the list of issues contained information on the progress that had been made since 2014, including socioeconomic indicators showing that Qatar had already achieved most of its development goals, the position of the Government with respect to the reservations it had entered and the challenges for the future.
4. Every effort had been made to give effect to the Committee's 2014 concluding observations on the initial report of Qatar (CEDAW/C/QAT/CO/1), in particular by raising awareness among decision makers and public officials about the concepts enshrined in the Convention and by strengthening ongoing processes of legislative and procedural reform. Over recent years, Qatar had been pursuing a strategic overhaul of its reservations and declarations with respect to a number of human rights treaties, also with a view to harmonizing its domestic legislation with those instruments. The efforts of the State to fulfil its commitments under the Convention were based on major national initiatives, such as the Qatar National Vision 2030, which provided an environment conducive to the attainment of human rights.
5. Since the submission of the initial report in 2014, far-reaching progress had been made on the legislative and institutional fronts. In addition, policies and strategies had been developed that aimed to enhance the human rights infrastructure, advance gender equality, empower women and introduce gender perspectives into development. In 2018, Qatar had acceded to both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, thus becoming a party to seven of the nine core international human rights treaties.
6. A number of major reforms had been made to the legal framework regulating human rights in general and the rights of migrant workers in particular. They included the following pieces of legislation: Act No. 15 of 2017, which was consistent with the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189); Act No. 21 of 2015, which regulated the entry, exit and residence of foreign nationals and abolished the *kafalah* sponsorship system; Act No. 10 of 2018 regarding permanent residency; Act No. 17 of 2018, which established a support and insurance fund for migrant workers; and Act No. 13 of 2018, which annulled the requirement for migrant workers to gain permission before departing the country. In addition, Qatar had signed bilateral agreements with 38 countries of origin of migrant workers.
7. The State's commitment to encouraging women to participate in public life was demonstrated by the fact that four women had recently been integrated into the Shura Council while a woman had been appointed as a spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the first time ever. Institutional measures designed to advance women's rights included the creation of the Family Affairs Department within the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs. At the level of civil society, the Qatar Foundation for Social Action, which had been set up in 2013, was responsible for overseeing the activities

of all organizations involved in social work and for developing plans and strategies aimed at furthering the objectives of civil society groups, in cooperation with State and private-sector entities. In May 2019, the Council of Ministers had approved a proposal to establish a national committee for women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

8. Alongside its efforts at the national level, Qatar had also been active on the regional and international stage. In particular, the Silatech Foundation had helped to offer employment opportunities to nearly 1 million young men and women since it was established in 2008, and it aimed to provide 2 million jobs across the Arab world by 2020. The “Education above All” initiative included four international programmes to help children across the world gain access to education. In addition, Qatar supported the Charlevoix Declaration on Quality Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls and Women in Developing Countries and had pledged to provide education to 1 million girls by 2021.

9. Qatar had provided financial support for a project to support Syrian refugees in Lebanon, which included the provision of health care for pregnant women, and it had funded research conducted by UN-Women into women and peace and security. It also gave financial backing to a number of international bodies, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Agreements for the opening of local offices in Qatar had been signed with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the International Organization for Migration, UNHCR and UNICEF.

10. Since June 2017, four neighbouring States had been subjecting Qatar to an unlawful blockade and unilateral coercive measures, including the suspension of all diplomatic and trade ties. Those actions had resulted in serious and ongoing human rights violations against: freedom of movement and of residence; the right to private property; the right to work; the right to education; freedom of opinion and expression; and the right to health. One of the worst impacts was the separation of families, which was having an adverse effect on society in general and on women and children in particular. The effects of the blockade had been amply documented in a report compiled by an OHCHR technical team following a visit to Qatar in November 2017 and the State had created a committee on compensation claims.

11. Qatar continued to protect and promote the human rights of citizens and residents alike, including citizens of the countries imposing the blockade, but it had also brought a case against the United Arab Emirates before the International Court of Justice regarding the obligation to implement the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. On 23 July 2018, the Court had ordered that Qatari families separated by the measures implemented by the United Arab Emirates should be reunited, that Qatari students affected by the measures should be allowed to complete their education in the United Arab Emirates or to obtain their educational records in order to continue their studies elsewhere and that Qataris affected by the measures should be given access to the courts and other judicial organs of the United Arab Emirates.

12. In addition, Qatar had lodged complaints against both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and had submitted communications to nine special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council. The International Court of Justice had recently rejected a request from the United Arab Emirates for Qatar to withdraw its complaint before the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Articles 1 to 6

13. **Ms. Haidar** said that she hoped the dialogue would contribute to promoting women’s rights in Qatar, which was one of the richest countries in the world in terms of per capita share of gross domestic product. While welcoming the progress of the previous four years and recognizing the impact of the blockade, the Committee nonetheless hoped to see further changes to domestic laws that still discriminated against women, notably the Family Act and the Nationality Act. She would like to know why certain laws that had been amended were not actually being implemented.

14. **Ms. Ameline** said that she wished to acknowledge the significant advances in the fundamental rights of women that had been achieved in recent years, in a troubled political context. She welcomed the State party's accession to important instruments of international law and its involvement in initiatives such as education for girls in areas of conflict.

15. She was concerned that the State party's reservations to the Convention might be placing a de facto limit on some of the legislative reforms it had enacted. She hoped that serious consideration would be given to withdrawing those reservations, partially or progressively if necessary, particularly in view of the fact that they affected such vital issues as violence, stereotyping and family status.

16. A permanent mechanism should be created within the National Human Rights Committee to supervise the implementation of the Convention. The mechanism could oversee existing legislation and propose amendments to eradicate discriminatory provisions, also with a view to achieving greater harmony between the Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Convention. She was concerned about the persistent legal loopholes in areas such as violence and private life, and she hoped that a definition of direct and indirect discrimination would soon be developed, one that covered all the situations that women had to face in public and private life and that embraced all social groups and communities.

17. Women's access to the courts needed to be regulated by clear rules that admitted no subjective interpretation, while judges and other public officials needed to be given training in the application of the Convention. Furthermore, legal procedures, notably those concerning burden of proof, needed to be amended to bring them into line with the Convention. She would be interested to know what status the State party intended to accord to civil society in its efforts to promote the rights of women.

18. **Mr. Al-Meraikhi** (Qatar) said that there was no concise definition of discrimination in the country's laws, but all of its legislation conformed to the principle of gender equality. Article 34 of the Constitution provided that all citizens had equal rights and duties and article 35 prohibited discrimination on grounds of sex, race and religion. No law prevented women from exercising their political, economic or social rights and they did not lose such rights when they married. A committee had been established to revise all legislation to ensure compliance with the international conventions ratified by Qatar and a series of legislative amendments had been introduced to that end. In accordance with article 68 of the Constitution, international conventions and instruments had the force of law once they had been ratified and published in the official gazette. Any aggrieved party was able to invoke any such conventions to seek redress through the justice system.

19. **Ms. Al-Kubaisi** (Qatar) said that the State would consider reviewing its reservations to the Convention in the future as part of its gradual approach to reform. Qatar had already withdrawn some of the reservations to other international conventions. The country's recent accession to, or ratification of, a number of international instruments in a very short space of time had placed such pressure on government institutions that it currently lacked the capacity to ratify additional international instruments, including the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

20. **Ms. Al-Khulaifi** (Qatar) said that her Government attached great importance to addressing gender stereotypes and empowering women while respecting the country's cultural values. Under the Qatar National Vision 2030, the State aimed to boost the participation of women in the workforce and empower women politically and socially. One of the goals of the second National Development Strategy for the period 2018–2022 was to bolster equality by ensuring that women had access to education and employment opportunities on an equal footing with men.

21. **Ms. Haidar** said that greater efforts should be made to ensure that the State party's laws complied with its Constitution and its international obligations. She was concerned, for example, that certain provisions of the Nationality Act were unconstitutional. Furthermore, the fact that Qatar did not have a functioning constitutional court made it impossible to challenge the constitutionality of its laws.

22. **Ms. Ameline** said that the objectives of the Qatar National Vision 2030 could not be fully achieved without a paradigm shift in terms of women's role in society. Effective

implementation of the country's progressive laws and the provisions of the Convention, which was difficult in a society with deep-rooted traditions, would play a key role in shifting that paradigm. The State party needed to be as bold in implementing its women's rights laws as it had been in passing them.

23. **Ms. Akizuki** said that she would appreciate comments from the delegation regarding the objections raised by some States parties to the reservations of Qatar on the grounds that they were incompatible with the Convention.

24. **Mr. Aldosari** (Qatar) said that the same naturalization procedures under the Nationality Act applied to both men and women. However, when a Qatari woman married a non-Qatari man, neither the husband nor their children were eligible for nationality of Qatar. Nonetheless, their children were granted permanent residence, which entitled them to key public services, including education and health care.

25. **Mr. Al-Meraikhi** (Qatar) said that a law establishing the Supreme Constitutional Court had been enacted and it was hoped that it would be operational in the very near future. The Government took a holistic approach to law-making, in which awareness-raising played a key role to ensure that laws were accepted by society and could therefore be implemented correctly. Significant progress had been made inasmuch as society was more open and accepting of opposing views than in the past. The reservations of Qatar to articles of the Convention were often due to conflicts with certain aspects of sharia law. Withdrawing those reservations would be no easy task since it would involve changing or adapting traditions that had been in place for centuries.

26. **Ms. Alshafai** (Qatar) said that the State's reservations to the Convention were constantly reviewed and the objections of other States parties had been taken into account. Efforts were being made through national mechanisms for women's issues to bring legislation into line with the Convention. A number of civil society organizations relating to human rights had been set up and the Government was working to strengthen their role in society.

27. **Ms. Verges** said she was concerned that the replacement of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs with the Department of Family Affairs, under the authority of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, constituted a downgrading of the institution responsible for women's rights and that its independence might have been undermined. She wondered what measures the State party intended to introduce to promote the work of the Department of Family Affairs and give it a higher standing within the Government. She wished to know to what degree the Department cooperated with the Social Work Foundation, which was responsible for dealing with various human rights issues. She would be interested to know what resources had been allocated to the implementation of the family cohesion strategy as part of the Qatar National Vision 2030 and what action plans were in place within the strategy to promote the rights of women in particular.

28. **Ms. Manalo** said she believed that the State party's failure to specify how it tackled stereotypes – a key part of State party's strategy to maintain family cohesion and empower women – indicated an inadequate understanding of temporary special measures under article 4 of the Convention or a lack of political will to adopt such measures.

29. **Ms. Abdulla** (Qatar) said that the Department of Family Affairs worked in cooperation with other government authorities in matters concerning the empowerment of women and proposed policies, legislation and programmes in that regard. The Department also developed programmes to promote the employment of women and combat discrimination. There was a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Family Affairs and the Social Work Foundation to enable the Foundation and civil society organizations to be involved in projects relating to women's rights.

30. **Ms. Al-Khulaifi** (Qatar) said that the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics would prepare a midterm report on the second National Development Strategy for the period 2018–2022, as it had done for the previous strategy, covering areas such as social protection, women's empowerment and capacity-building.

31. **Ms. Al-Muftah** (Qatar) said that the State had made progress in introducing the laws required to tackle stereotypes. All government bodies worked together with civil society to

ensure the effective implementation of those laws. The education system, research institutions and the media also played a key role in raising awareness to help bring about progressive change in a relatively conservative society.

32. **Ms. Verges** said that she wished to know whether there were any plans to establish an independent body specifically dedicated to women's affairs. It would be helpful to know what proportion of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs budget was allocated to the Department of Family Affairs. She wondered whether there were plans to create a truly effective tool for promoting family rights. There was a need to distinguish women's affairs from family affairs, since they were two distinct areas that required specific attention.

33. **Ms. Haidar** said that she wished to know, in light of the lack of a dedicated national institution for the advancement of women, to what extent the National Human Rights Committee was competent to ensure that the amendments to the law to promote women's rights were enforced. She wondered which body was responsible for monitoring practices that were no longer in accordance with current laws. For example, although women were no longer required by law to obtain permission from a guardian to work, that practice continued. Consideration should be given to special temporary measures to strengthen women's involvement in various areas of public life.

34. **Ms. Manalo** recommended that the Government should seek assistance from the United Nations and other international organizations with training on article 4 of the Convention with a view to deepening its understanding in that regard.

35. **Ms. Abdulla** (Qatar) said that ensuring respect for women's rights was incumbent on all stakeholders, competent authorities and State departments in Qatar. To prevent duplication of work relating to women's affairs, a memorandum of understanding had been signed between the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs and the Qatar Foundation for Social Work. Most of the Ministry's budget was earmarked for the Department of Family Affairs to cover all of its responsibilities. Budgetary allocations were also made for the programmes under the second National Development Strategy, which all addressed women's needs. In May 2019, the Supreme Council for Family Affairs approved the establishment of a national committee on women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

36. **Ms. Alshafai** (Qatar) said that the National Human Rights Committee ran awareness-raising workshops and training sessions for all people, including students, concerning all articles of the Convention and periodically submitted recommendations to the State.

37. **Mr. Safarov** said that he wondered whether national legislation included a definition of discrimination on the basis of sex and whether sanctions and preventive measures relating to gender-based discrimination would be included in criminal and administrative legislation. He was concerned that unmarried women were discriminated against in national legislation and wished to know whether campaigns were organized to prevent gender-based discrimination. He asked what kind of advocacy programmes targeted at girls to combat sexist stereotypes were in place.

38. The Criminal Code should cover domestic violence, including violence committed by the victim's relatives and violence against migrant domestic workers. He was concerned about the failure to adopt a national action plan and a specific law to prevent domestic violence and about the absence of protection orders in cases of domestic violence. He asked what maintenance was awarded to divorced women. He would like to know whether there were laws that entitled husbands to punish their wives, what kind of punishment was admitted and for what kind of acts.

39. Civil servants and law enforcement officials should be trained in the prevention of gender-based violence and rehabilitation of victims. Given that only one shelter was established for victims of gender-based violence, he asked whether the Government provided funding for the shelter and for NGOs working in that area. A body should be established for the prevention of gender-based violence and the coordination of relevant NGOs. Further investment must be made in victim protection to improve access to justice, quality services and appropriate infrastructure. He asked whether the discriminatory dress codes for women

included in the Criminal Code would be repealed. Women's representation should be increased in the Ministry of the Interior and police force.

40. **Ms. Leinarte**, while welcoming the various preventive measures in place to combat trafficking in persons, said that the apparent lack of investigations and prosecutions for trafficking in persons revealed a level of impunity. The failure to officially identify trafficking victims pointed to weak referral mechanisms. Despite reports that foreign workers' passports were being withheld by their employers and the fact that measures had been introduced to combat trafficking in persons, such as increased labour inspections, there had been no investigations into potential trafficking offences, prosecutions or detection of victims of trafficking under existing anti-trafficking laws. While the recently reported deportation of potential sex trafficking victims was understandable, as prostitution was illegal in Qatar, the Government should consider the approach taken in various other countries, which recognized the link between sex trafficking and prostitution and the demand for prostitution and sex trafficking. Rather than punish the women involved in prostitution, such countries were focusing on the clients, who were driving both prostitution and human trafficking.

41. **Ms. Abdulla** (Qatar) said that the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, composed of State bodies and civil society, coordinated the monitoring, prevention and combating of trafficking, oversaw the alignment of national legislation with relevant international instruments and carried out awareness-raising activities. In June 2019, the National Committee had approved the national plan to combat human trafficking and was responsible for its implementation, which had been progressing in accordance with the fixed timeline. The four pillars of the plan covered: preventing, monitoring and combating trafficking in persons, raising awareness and providing training for law enforcement officials; identifying, protecting and supporting victims of trafficking; prosecuting crimes and strengthening the rule of law; enhancing international cooperation; and increasing transparency.

42. **Mr. Aldosari** (Qatar) said that various measures and legal provisions had been established setting out trafficking in persons as a criminal offence, including the Anti-Human Trafficking Act of 2011. The department issuing visas, under the Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with various other ministries finalized the recruitment process for migrant workers in eight countries of origin, including Bangladesh and the Philippines, thereby strengthening protection of migrant workers' rights. The recruitment process was carried out digitally and involved data collection and medical tests.

43. The Criminal Code did not include gender-based discriminatory provisions. All forms of violence were criminalized, and provisions were set forth to deter and punish gender-based violence. Article 279 of the Criminal Code, for example, covered the crime of rape, which was punishable by the death penalty or life imprisonment; article 286 provided for imprisonment for the sexual assault of any person through coercion, threat or deceit; and article 291 set out prison sentences and fines for insulting the modesty of a woman even by word or gesture.

44. **Ms. Al-Maadeed** (Qatar) said that women migrant workers were protected from sexual exploitation under the Criminal Code provisions on prostitution, which set out harsher penalties where the crime was committed through coercion or deceit, the victim was under 16 or the perpetrator was a relative or guardian. The Anti-Human Trafficking Act of 2011 also provided for prison sentences and fines for trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation or prostitution. Any assault committed by a husband against his wife was defined as a criminal offence in the Criminal Code.

45. **Ms. Al-Sulaiti** (Qatar) said that the education curricula was currently being reviewed. School textbooks were being revised to address gender equality and portray women in various roles, such as diplomats and sportswomen. A life skills subject had been introduced with a focus on opportunities in the charitable, cultural and economic fields. The scientific excellence award had been granted to girls and promoted their involvement in science.

46. **Mr. Al-Henzab** (Qatar) said that an anti-trafficking office had been set up to deal with cases of trafficking in persons. Memorandums of understanding regarding the classification of trafficking acts had been signed between the Government and other States

where trafficking took place. The Government followed up on its international obligations relating to trafficking.

Articles 7 to 9

47. **Ms. Manalo** said that she wondered whether the Shura Council would be appointing more women and how women were encouraged to aspire to such positions. She wished to know what plans were in place to facilitate women's representation in ministries other than those traditionally focused on women, and in the military and paramilitary. She would appreciate further details of the extent of women's participation in the public service and about the presence of NGOs for women. What incentives were in place to encourage people to carry out NGO work?

48. **Ms. Akizuki** said that Qatar was to be commended for numerous advances, notably the adoption of the law on permanent residence, No. 10 of 2018. However, she was concerned that, under the Nationality Act, a Qatari woman married to a foreign man could not confer nationality upon her children under any circumstances, whereas a Qatari man married to a foreign woman automatically did so. She would therefore welcome an explanation of the discrepancy between the discriminatory provisions of the Act and the Constitution, whose article 35 declared all persons to be equal before the law. While she agreed that granting nationality was a sovereign matter subject to the discretion of the State, she believed that such discretionary powers relied on States making rules and laws in accordance with their international obligations. Given that the Nationality Act was not in accordance with the State party's obligations under the Convention, and in view of the Committee's general recommendation No. 21 (1994) on equality in marriage and family relations, which stated that nationality was critical to full participation in society and was the basis for other political rights, she invited the State party to consider amending the Act accordingly.

49. Regarding the current situation, she wished to know how many stateless children of Qatari women existed, how many of them had obtained permanent residence, and whether that status allowed them to obtain passports. The Committee would also appreciate information on the number of foreign men who had divorced or separated from Qatari women, leaving them alone with stateless children, and on the progress of the working group that had been formed to study the Nationality Act. Lastly, she asked whether the State had ever stripped certain groups of their nationality because of their political position.

50. **Ms. Al-Muftah** (Qatar) said that the Shura Council was the national legislature, which was mandated to review and amend laws, decrees and budgets. The Council had five committees, all of which had female members, who fully participated and exercised their rights and were not subjected to any form of discrimination. In 2017, 22 new members had been appointed to the Council; most of them selected on the basis of their educational background and professional experience in different fields. Of the four female members, three were academics, including Ms. Hessa Al-Jaber, a former Minister of Information and Communications Technology.

51. Qatari women had stood as candidates in municipal council elections since they had first been contested. Women were also active in the sphere of defence and security, with more than 4,000 working in the military, and they constituted 37 per cent of the workforce. The Government pursued a gradual approach to eliminating stereotypes, empowering women and building their capacity. It did not seek to highlight its achievements in the media but focused on ensuring that women received the necessary education to secure positions and pursue occupations in which they could help themselves and serve their country.

52. **Mr. Aldosari** (Qatar) said that under the Nationality Act, nationality was conferred on the basis of a blood relationship and dual nationality was prohibited. No group of people had ever been stripped of their nationality owing to their political position. Nationality could be lost only if it had been unlawfully granted. The Government followed a humanitarian approach to dealing with stateless persons, in line with the recommendations of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Even though Qatar had fewer stateless persons in its territory than other countries in the region, the Government had taken steps to resolve their status, including through a 1984 law on permanent residence for stateless persons. A number of stateless women had received Qatari nationality after marrying Qatari

nationals. In 2017 and 2018, a total of 781 people had received either nationality or permanent residence status, and there were currently 930 children holding permanent residence permits.

53. **Ms. Al-Khulaifi** (Qatar) said that women had a constitutional right to work on an equal basis with men. The Labour Act provided for equal rights for women, including equal pay for equal work, while other laws governed maternity leave and protected women from hazardous employment. Institutions such as the Qatar Foundation also worked to protect women.

54. **Ms. Al-Maadeed** (Qatar) said that five women had stood as candidates in the 2019 municipal council elections and two had been elected. There was no institutional discrimination in the Ministry of the Interior, where women could be found in all civilian and military departments, including in high-ranking positions. If any discrimination existed, it was positive discrimination that favoured women in terms of their leave entitlements and protection from hazardous employment.

55. **Ms. Abdulla** (Qatar) said that the Constitution guaranteed the freedom to establish associations in accordance with the law, while Act No. 12 of 2004, on private associations and institutions, regulated their operations and provided for the establishment of professional associations. The Act did not place any restrictions on the creation of women's associations, although it allowed for the closure of associations if certain taxes were not paid. The Ministry of Culture and Sport headed a network of volunteer organizations which had a strong civil society presence and which independently maintained registers of their members.

56. **Ms. Akizuki**, noting that a blood relationship was required for the transmission of nationality, said that it appeared that only men's blood was respected; women's blood was disregarded. Recalling that her own country, Japan, had amended its nationality law upon acceding to the Convention; she invited Qatar to learn from the experiences of other countries in the region.

57. **Ms. Ameline** said that she wished to know more about the criteria for obtaining permanent residence status, its purpose and whether it was aimed at specific nationalities. How did the Government ensure that women were able to obtain permanent residence on equal terms?

58. **Ms. Manalo** said that it was encouraging to note that, in 2017, there had been 90 women attached to the diplomatic corps, including 3 female ambassadors. In her experience, women played an essential role in diplomatic negotiations and so she was curious to know how the State party might accelerate women's advancement to ambassadorial posts.

59. **Ms. Haidar** said she was disappointed to hear that women who married foreigners had no prospect of obtaining dual nationality, which was contrary to the Convention. By addressing the issue as a matter of priority, the Government could strengthen the rights of those women in respect of aspects such as inheritance and guardianship of children and ensure that they retained their Qatari nationality if they married non-nationals. While she understood that the permanent residence status was intended to address the statelessness of children of Qatari women who married foreigners, she considered that permitting dual nationality would provide greater stability for those women.

60. **Mr. Aldosari** (Qatar) said that the Nationality Act applied the principle of *jus sanguinis* and that, under the Constitution, a child's nationality was linked to that of the father. However, the State was constantly considering how to improve its laws and was contemplating a comprehensive reform package, which might address matters such as the permanent residence, stay and departure of immigrants.

61. **Ms. Alshafai** (Qatar) said that women had been joining the diplomatic service in increasing numbers since 1996. According to the latest figures, the diplomatic corps contained 167 female diplomats, 4 of whom held the rank of ambassador. Qatari women were also represented in international organizations, as shown by the recent election of Ms. Abdulla Ali Al-Misnad to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs encouraged women's participation in the diplomatic world and had organized intensive training workshops for that purpose.

62. **Ms. Al-Maadeed** (Qatar) said that Act No. 10 of 2018 described several categories of residence and the privileges enjoyed by holders of permanent residence permits. Permanent residence could be acquired by the husband or the wife of a national of Qatar, and by the children of Qatari mothers and non-Qatari fathers.

63. **Ms. Haidar** said that she was concerned that some individuals would be eligible neither for permanent residence status nor for naturalization, which required 25 years' continuous residence. She suggested that the eligibility requirements for permanent residence and for obtaining nationality should be reviewed and any gaps remedied in a fair and sustainable manner.

64. **Mr. Al-Henzab** (Qatar) said that he shared the Committee's desire to see a better implementation of the Convention. Nationality laws were often controversial. However, the matter was under consideration and it was possible that the law might be amended in the not-too-distant future.

65. **Mr. Al-Muraikhi** (Qatar) said that he agreed that nationality was a sensitive issue. The Government was alert to the education, health and living standards of foreign residents so as to ensure that they enjoyed stable conditions and a dignified life with respect for their rights. Much was being done to adapt the country's laws to international criteria and, although that would be a lengthy process, the Government was satisfied with its progress and the balance it had struck between its current laws and international standards. It had learned and had drawn inspiration from international organizations, for example, by introducing permanent residence status as a step towards nationality. It would need time to assess the results of the measure before undertaking any future project on naturalization. The Government recognized that its foreign population contained talented persons from many professions and that Qatar had benefited from their presence.

Articles 10 to 14

66. **Ms. Song** said that Qatar was to be congratulated for its achievements in women's education, including the increase in the number of girls who went to university, its impressive education budget, the conclusion of a national campaign on the right to education, and regional and international education initiatives. However, while noting the efforts undertaken on behalf of the children of migrant workers, the Committee remained concerned about their education. Therefore, she wished to know what proportion of children of migrant workers were unable to attend school and what specific measures, apart from the opening of new schools, had been taken to ensure their attendance. The delegation might also clarify whether Amiri Decree No. 25, making education compulsory for all children from the primary level to the upper secondary level, or until the age of 18, also applied to the children of migrant workers.

67. In respect of the information provided on efforts to influence the mindsets of students and attitudes towards relationships with the opposite sex, she asked whether all teachers were trained in women's empowerment and gender equality. She was also interested to know whether the Government regularly reviewed school textbooks to ensure that they were gender sensitive and did not contain gender stereotyping or discrimination against women and girls.

68. The Committee noted with appreciation that Qatar University adhered to the principle of gender equality in its admissions policies, that girls had higher rates of acceptance than boys in some faculties, and that more girls were choosing to study non-traditional subjects. However, given that the College of Health Sciences and the College of Pharmacology appeared to only accept women, she wondered whether there was any other reason, besides the pressing need of the State for women in the health-care field referred to in the State party report, for such an admissions policy. Did the authorities consider that health sciences and pharmacology were not appropriate subjects for men, and did they foresee any changes so that boys might be admitted to the two colleges in question?

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.